Instruction of Youth

IN

CHRISTIAN PIETY.

Taken out of the

Sacred Scriptures and Holy Fathers;

WITH

A very profitable TREATISE for MEDITATION, or MENTAL PRAYER.

By CHARLES, GOBINET,

Doctor of Divinity, of the House and Society of SORBON, Principal of the College of PLESSIS-SORBON.

VOL. I.

The THIRD EDITION, Revised, Corrected, and the Language much Improved, with very large ADDITIONS.

Ut detur Parvulis Aftutia; Adolescenti Scientia & Intellectus. PROV. i.



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PRAYER

TO THE

SON of GOD.

TO thee, O Saviour of Souls, according to my duty and defire do I consecrate this work. It came from thee, and it ought to return to thee. And in offering it to thee, I restore a thing which by all manner of titles appertains to thee *. They are thy divine words which are here used, and those with which thou wast pleased to inspire one of thy greatest servants. Thy grace bath affisted me to compose them by particular aids which I bave received from thee in this small labour. That fervent zeal which thou wast pleased so frequently to manifest for the salvation of young souls, when thou wast upon earth, bath given birth to this design; and the hope I had of thy succour, bath given me the confidence to undertake it. Let not my misery stop the effects of thy bounty, nor hinder thy pious instructions from producing in souls the fruit they ought to bring forth. Divine JESUS! animate with thy boly spirit the words of this book. Cause them for whom it is made, in reading it, to acknowledge the strift obligations they have to

A 2

Serve.

serve thee, and the earnest desire thou bast of their salvation. Speak to their hearts at the same time that these letters inform their eyes, and inspire them by the motions of thy grace, with the documents they shall here find for their salvation. It behoveth thee now rather than at any other time, to make the effects of thy mercy appear upon young souls. Tempus faciendi Domine, disfipaverunt legem tuam. Pfal. cxviii. The greatest part abandon thee, when they should begin to serve thee. They forget that folemn promise they made thee at baptism, and the inestimable favours they have received from thy infinite goodness. O divine Saviour! Let not the fouls be lost which thou hast redeemed with the precious blood, and for the salvation of whom thou hast teftified so great love. Reserve them for thy service; binder them from bending their knees before Baal, and from being destroyed by the infection of this perverse age. Make that zeal which thou hadst for the salvation of youth, revive in thy priests, and grant me the grace. which I most humbly beg, to be able to employ faithfully therein my pains and labours for thy glory.



PREFACE

THIS book, dear reader, bath no great need of a preface; and if I give you one bere, it is only to tell you that I had no design to make it. Prefaces are necessary to advertise the reader, either of the defign of the author, or of the occasion which gave birth to the work, or of the order and method that is observed therein, or of the profit that may be reaped, or of some such like thing. As for my design, it is no other than what the title of the book imports, viz. to instruct youth in piety. This is all at which I aim and aspire. The occasion of undertaking it was, because being called to the conduct of youth, I endeavour'd to make myself capable of so important an employment, and anfiver the pious intentions of that company which gave me the bonour of such a charge. Now in labouring to instruct myself, I found that what I had prepared for my own use might serve for the instruction of youth, if it were reduced into method. And this also might be most useful to me, because it is most certain, that the best way to learn, is to teach. I have therefore disposed of it into the method you see, wherein I treat of five things, which seemed to me most necessary for giving young people a compleat instruction in piety, viz. 1. The motives which oblige them thereto. 2. The means they ought to employ to obtain it. 3. The obstacles and difficulties which occur therein. 4. The virtues which are peculiar to their age. 5. The importance of making a good choice of a state of life, and the means to perform it in a due manner. Which is a subject little known among young people, and less practised.

As to the profitableness of this book, dear reader, it is not my part, but yours to judge of it. The end for which it is composed, which is the instruction of youth, will make you esteem it useful. The matter of it, which is chiefly taken out of the sacred scripture and fathers, will cause you to make the same judgment. If the me-

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thod I have observed seem casy to you, it will give the

final decision.

In fine, I write for young people: for them have I composed this work, and particularly for them whom God bath pleased to commit to my charge. If others more advanced in age take the pains to read it, I desire they would peruse it with the spirit of charity, excusing what they find defective in it, and receiving kindly what they shall find good. But you, dear reader, for whom I write, I exhort you to improve yourself by this small labour of mine for your salvation. I call you in this instruction by the name of Theotime, which fignifies one who honours God; because I consider you in that state, or at least willing to attain it. Read then with this spirit and destre. Read to be instructed there concerning your salvation, and to learn therein betimes what you are to do during the whole course of your life, that is, to ferve bim to whom you owe all. And lastly, that you may receive a solid and assured advantage, I beg tree things.

First, that you read it with three conditions; with a desire to learn, with attention, and in order, that is,

one part after another.

Secondly, that you would consider that it is not I who speak to you, but God, by the divine instructions he bath given us in the sacred scripture, and in the writings of the holy fathers. Read it therefore with all the respect which is due to that adorable master; and in these sacred fountains search for true wisdom, without which all the rest is but folly. Happy are you if you search for it as you ought, and if you can one day say with one of the wisest of mertals, (Eccl. v.) that you have searched for wisdom during your youth, and that having seriously applied yourself to the enquiry, have found it, and made progress therein. You will, as he did, give all the glory to God, who is the author thereof. Danti mihi sapientiam dabo gloriam; and you will receive the advantage, which will continue with you for all eternity.

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The reasons and motives which oblige men apply themselves to virtue in their youth.

pro taching stonic C.H.A. Prin I: viago and

The end for which man is created.

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Fall things necessary for man The end for to know, the end for which which man is crehe is placed in this world defirst place. Because, being

a reasonable creature, he ought to act for a final end, in the enjoyment whereof he may find his eternal happinels. Now he cannot act for this end without a knowledge of it, which excites a defire, makes him fearch for and employ the means of obtaining it. A man who knows not his last end is like a beast, because he regards only things present, things material and fenfible, after the manner of brutes. this is so much the more miserable than they, fince they find in these material things the felicity they are capable of; but he, instead of finding repose, meets with nothing but difgusts, and the source of endless misfortunes.

From the ignorance of this last end springs all the diforders and corruption of mens lives; because for-

getting their heavenly beginning, and the noble and divine end for which their creator defign'd them, they entirely stop at the enjoyment of the pleasures of this mortal life, without raising their thoughts or defires higher, living upon earth as if they were made for the earth.

And as it would move compassion, to see a child born of royal blood, ordained by his birth one day to wear a crown and scepter, being bred up amongst peasants, ignorant of his extraction, applying himself wholly to till the earth, to bound all his pretensions within the limits of getting a miserable lively-hood with the sweat of his brow, without having the least thought of the high fortune to which he was born: so it is much to be deplored, to see men who are the children of heaven, designed by God to reign there eternally, live in an entire forgetfulness of that end for which they are created, and setting all their affection upon earthly things, miserably deprive themselves of that immense happiness which the bounty of their creator prepared for them in heaven.

For this reason, dear Theotime, resolving to exhort you to embrace virtue in your youth, I propose unto you first, and before all things, what you are, and the end for which you are created, to banish that so common and pernicious a forgetfulness to men, that knowing your last end, you may ardently aspire to it, and begin betimes to strive to make yourself worthy,

and finally obtain it. bus that eld ton eword on w men

Recollect your thoughts then, dear three things:

what you are, and for what end.

I. You are a man, that is, a crea-What man is. ture endow'd with understanding and reason, compos'd of a body, whose structure is admirable, and of a reasonable and intellectual soul, made to the image of God. You are the most perfect of all visible creatures. II. You were not made by yourfelf,
for that is impossible; you have rewho made
ceiv'd from another all that you have. man.

And from whom have you receiv'd it, but from him who hath created heaven and earth, and who is the author of all things? It is he who hath form'd your body in your mother's womb, and who hath created your foul by his power. You are the work of a God; and besides the father you have upon earth, you have another in heaven, to whom you owe your all.

you owe your all.

III. But why did God make you? Why God
Be attentive, Theotime; for what end, made man.

think you, did God place you in this world? Was it to enjoy the pleasures and contentments of this life and the fenfes? To heapup riches? To acquire glory and reputation amongst men? Nothing less. You have a foul too noble to be destin'd to such wretched and perishable things: pleasures are chang'd into pain, riches perish, and glory vanisheth. Is it to continue a long time upon earth, to find there your happiness, and to look for nothing after this life? If it be for there is no difference betwixt you and beafts. Doth not this so noble a soul which God hath bestow'd on you, endowed with understanding, will, and memory, capable to know all things, clearly manifest that you were created for a higher and more honourable end? Doth not this figure of the body you bear, the stature erect, the head on high, and eyes rais'd towards heaven, (a figure opposite to that of beasts, which looks only upon the earth) teach you that you are not made for the earth?

Thus while the mute creation downward bend Their fight, and to their earthy mother tend, Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes

Beholds bis own bereditary skies. Dryd. Ovid.

Beasts are made for the earth, they there find their happiness, and for that reason they regard nothing B 2 but

NOY

but the earth: but you, dear Theotime, you are created for heaven; that is the place of your habitation, as it is that of your origin; your foul came from

heaven, and it ought to return thither. William

But what do you find in heaven, that can render you happy? Will it be the fight of the firmament, with all those beauteous stars? Of the sun, that admirable vessel, that excellent work of God? Vas admirable, opus excels. Eccles. xliii. And of all that is wonderful and great in heaven? Not at all. All these things are not capable to effect your felicity, God has esteemed them too mean for you; he made them for your service, not to be the object and cause of your happiness. In a word, consider all that is in the universe, and all those vast and wonderful things which God hath created, all this is not able to complete your happiness, and God hath not made you for any of these things.

For what then? For nothing less than himself, to possess and enjoy him in heaven. He hath not judg'd the most beauteous of his creatures worthy of you; he hath given himself to be the object of your happiness. For this reason he gave you a soul, form'd to his image, capable of possessing him, and which, by reason of this capacity, is never content nor satisfy'd with the possessions and delights of this life, as every

one finds by experience. The not hopping

You were not then made for creatures, dear Theotime, but for the creator. Your last end is not the
enjoyment of creatures, but of God himself. You
were created to be happy by the possession of a God
in heaven, and to reign with him in a selicity incomprehensible to human understanding: Oculus non vidit,
nec auris andivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, que preparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum. I Cor. ii. And
this for how long? For all eternity, that is, for a
time which shall never end, but continue as long
as God himself. This is that most noble end for which
you

CHAP.

you are design'd; this is the inheritance which your celestial father hath prepared for you; this is that end for which he hath created you and all this visible world, destin'd for your use and his own glory.

This being fo, recollect your thoughts and fix upon

thefertwo points be selder out I brook od?

in order to that blessed end for which tantressections God hath design'd you? Have you upon the last aspir'd thither with all your heart? end.

Have you endeavour'd to make your-

felf worthy? Alas! perhaps as yet you have not feriously thought of it; perhaps you are far removed from it by a life full of sin, imitating the generality of men, who turn their backs to that happy country to which their heavenly father calls them. O blindness of men, how great art thou! O my dear child, how do I deplore your misfortune, if you are of that number!

2. Wherefore confider in the fecond place what you have to do from henceforth, in order to obtain that happy end for which you are created. How long will you think fo little of your dear country? How long will you forget heaven, O child of heaven, whose origin is heavenly, and are defign'd for heaven alone! O man (faith S. Peter Chryfologus, Serm. 712) what have you to do with the earth, you who acknowledge yourself of beavenly extraction, when you say, our father who art in beaven? Manifest therefore a celestial life in an earthly babitation; if you live otherwise, you stain your noble stock, and injure your beavenly origin. Conclude then, dear Theotime, and make here a holy refolution to aspire to that happy end for which you were created, and to labour carefully to make yourfelf worthy, by a life not unbecoming a child of God, defigned to possess heaven and God himself. This is to be done by flying fin, the only obstacle which can divert you from it and destroy you for ever, and by embracing virtue, the only path which leads to it.

Of our vocation to the grace of baptism, and its obligations. world, defin'd for your use and his own glory.

This being to H . A. V I T O Me hat and fix moon

last end.

The second TF the noble end for which God thing necessary has created you is a pressing moto be known. tive for engaging in his fervice, the The means of means he has appointed for attaining attaining our that end have no less force. For this you were by his immense favour made a Christian, and rescued by holy bap-

tism from the universal destruction of mankind thro' from it by a life full of this, imitating the generality of

Here, Theotime, you ought to apply a ferious attention, to comprehend the greatness of this inestimable benefit. Tis of great importance to know it in your youth, if you will avoid the ordinary misfortune of Christians, the greatest part of whom are absolutely ignorant what it is to be a Christian, and what that name and state obliges them to. This is the cause why they are fo undeferving, leading a life altogether contrary to the fanctity of their state, and why they are misfortunately loft in the vocation wherein alone they can be faved.

For this reason I beseech you in the name of God, to read attentively this chapter divided into two articlesi shi lardilar a rederedt themala ? novased in tra

and not solved A R.T IC LE L. wind deliver

Of the excellence of the state of a Christian, and of the favour God bestows on him whom he calls to this state

What it is TOU are a Christian, Theotime, by to be a Chrif- the grace of God; but do you tian. understand what this is, and what noidy sissaids you are by this quality? Take notice

of it, and learn to know the great favour God beflow'd on you in the day of your baptism.

By

By the baptism which you have receiv'd, you are wash'd from original fin by the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ; Apoc. i. deliver'd from the universal curse of mankind incurr'd by fin, freed from the power of the Devil; Eph. ii. You have been made the child of God, the disciple of Jesus Christ your Saviour; Gal. ii. You have acquired God for your father, Jesus Christ for your master; Matt. xxiii. your instructor, your example, and for the rule of your life; the holy church for your mother and guardian; the angels for your protectors, the faints for your inter-cessors. You have been made the temple of God, who dwells in you by grace, I Cor. iii. the heir to his eternal kingdom, Jac. ii. from the right and hope whereof you were fallen for ever; and you are brought back into the fecure way to arrive there, being made a member of Jesus Christ and his church, out of which there is no falvation, and wherein you are now illuminated with the light of the faith of Jesus Christ, instructed by his doctrine, nourish'd with his precious body and blood, affifted by his grace, furnish'd with all the necessary means for your salvation. O God, how noble and how honourable is the state of a Christian! What acknowledgments, Theotime, ought you to render to almighty God, who hath heap'd upon you fuch immense benefits!

To comprehend better the greatness thereof, con-

fider yet that which follows.

estate

1. God was not at all oblig'd to do Three imfo much for you, but it is a pure ef- portant confifect of his mercy, and of the immense derations.

love he hath for you. It was not (faith the apostle S. Paul) for our good works, but by his mercy that God bath saved us, by the washing of the new birth, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly by Jesus Christ our saviour. Tit. iii. 5. Misson on B. 4. EVILL

2. With-

2. Without this favour which God hath shewn you, you could never have been sav'd: for there is no salvation without faith, and without professing the Christian catholick religion. Where would you have been, if God had not shew'd you this mercy?

3. He hath not done this favour to thousands of men who live in pagan countries, in the darkness of ignorance and fin; nor to fo many hereticks, who altho' they be baptis'd as you, yet live in error separated from the true faith of the catholick church, which is the pillar and ground of truth; I Tim. iii. Why were not you of that number? Why hath God made you to be born in a Christian country rather than others, and in the bosom of the catholick church, where you are instructed in the divine mysteries, and things necessary for your salvation? How have you merited this favour? What happiness is it for you, dear Theotime, to have experienced so great bounty of our God! Bleffed are we, O Grael, for that we know what is pleasing to God. Baruc. iv. O how fortunate are we by the mercy of God, which hath call'd us to the knowledge of his divine mysteries and adorable will! He hath not shew'd this goodness to all the world, Pf. cxlvii. And why hath he done it to us rather than others? O dear Theotime, how is it possible that we should not fix our affections upon a God who hath lov'd us fo much? an administrate basic representation of

Learn here from a Christian king the esteem you ought to have for your vocation. St. Lewis, king of France, had such a value for the favour God shew'd him in making him a Christian, that he not only preferr'd it before his kingdom, as in effect it is infinitely greater, but having been baptiz'd in the castle of Poiss, he would bear that name, and be call'd Lewis of Poiss, and thus sign'd his letters and dispatches, esteeming this title more glorious than that of king of France. And S. Augustine, speaking of the emperor Theodosius, says, That he accounted himself

more bappy in being a member of the church, than emperor of the world; Aug. lib. 5. de Civ. Dei, c. 20. These great men, Theotime, knew how to value the grace of Christianity according to its real worth. tifin. The prieft demanding, Do you renounce the devil

b towing no Y ARTICLE Mande siddle bus

Abrenancia, Irenounce. O Theorims, have non ever Of the great obligations of a Christian.

IF the vocation to Christianity be so a Three great high a favour, what are the obli- Christian obligations of it? Doubtless very great, gations. and far more so than what the gene- lad ve and rality of Christians imagine. Be attentive, Theotime, and learn what your profession obliges you to.

It obliges you to believe firmly all that God hath reveal'd to us by his First obliga-fon Jesus Christ, comprized under tion of Chrisfour heads; viz. The mysteries of tians. faith, the maxims he preach'd, the re-

compence of the good, and the punishment of the wicked. You was admitted to baptism only upon this condition. The priest demanded of you previoufly, Do you believe in the Father, in the Son our favi. our and redeemer, and in the Holy Ghost? And you answer'd by the mouth of your godfather, Credo, I believe. But remember that this faith ought to be firm, generous, and efficacious. Firm,

not doubting of any thing that ought Three con-to be believed. Generous, not being ditions of faith

asham'd to make profession of it be-

OT-

fore men. Efficacious, living according to the truths you believe, as we are about to fay, and not by your actions giving the lye unto your faith; imitating many Christians, who, as the apostle says, Confess Jesus Christ with their mouths, and deny him by their works. tre he had baptized you, cleathed you with a i. I.T. garmene, Laying, Receive this cibite garment, were

Second ChriThe profession of Christianity oblistian obligatiges you to renounce the devil, and all
on, his works. This is also a condition
upon which you were admitted to bap-

tism. The priest demanding, Do you renounce the devil, and all bis pomps, and all bis works? You answer'd. Abrenuntio, I renounce. O Theotime, have you ever reflected upon this renunciation, and do you comprehend it? It is a folemn profession which you have made, not to ferve the devil, nor follow his pomps, that is, the falle appearances of earthly goods and pleafures, by the love of which he endeavours to feduce and destroy men; and to fly from all his works, that is, fin, of which he is the first author. It is a promise you made to God in the hands of the church, in the fight of angels, and wherein, as S. Augustin fays, (8-Aug. 1. 4. de Symbolo ad Catecb. c. 4.) you have made a renunciation, not speaking to men, but to God, and the angels, who are witnesses and depositaries of your word, and who carefully keep it in heaven. You are obliged to observe this renunciation which you have made; you have abjur'd the devil by your words, you must also abandon him by your life and actions, if you will not be accounted a perfidious fugitive. Alas! Theotime, have you done so? At least, will you do it for the future? Is it possible that you should return to that enemy, whom you have so solemnly renounced? Quid tibi cum pompis diaboli, quibus renuntiasti ? Quid tibi cum pompis diaboli, amator Christi? Aug. ibid.

The profession of a Christian obliges
Third obli- you to live in innocence, slying sin
gation of a more than death, and practising the
Christian. Virtues of a Christian. To admonish
you of this obligation, the priest, aster he had baptized you, cloathed you with a white
garment, saying, Receive this white garment, which
may you carry unstain'd before the judgment seat of God.

To

To make you remember by that exterior whiteness, and by those words, to preserve carefully the beauty and interior purity which your soul had then received by the grace of baptism. O Theotime, meditate well upon these words, and call to mind what will befall you at the judgment of God, if you defile that innocence by a life of sin. This white robe, with which you have been cloathed, will condemn you in that dreadful day; the priest who baptized you will rife up against you, and demand of God ven-

geance for abusing the grace of your baptism.

I shall recount to you on this occasion the memorable behaviour of a deacon of Carthage, called Murita, to the judge Elpidophorus an Arian, who having been received by him to baptism, had renounc'd afterwards the catholick faith. This holy deacon, being cited before that wicked judge to give an account of his faith, carry'd with him the white garment with which he had cloath'd him at his baptism, and expofing it, spoke to him these words, with which he drew tears from all that were present: Bebold, O Elpidophorus, minister of error, the white garment, which will accuse you before the divine majesty at the day of judgment. I have carefully preserved it as a proof of your apostacy, and to precipitate you into the abyss of bell: It serv'd you as an ornament when you came from baptism, wash'd and cleans'd from your sins; and it shall serve to make you suffer more sensibly the eternal flames. Victor Uticensis lib. 3. persecut. Vandalorum. L'importad d'oble bas mud cona

is evidently follows, that the turn

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CHAPCHILL TOY SEE O'L' and by there words, to preferve carcially, the beauty

That God requires, and particularly accepts the ferllew statem wice of young people. sand shi vi supporting worts, and only to mind what will be fell

you at the put III B.V.E.T.O Mou defile that in-

their youth.

Third confideration obA Fter the two preceding confifideration obliging men to more particular, to convince you of ferve God in the strict obligation you have to con-their youth. fecrate yourself to God in your youth. The first which I advance is, that

God earnestly desires to be serv'd by you in that age, and that the fervice of young people is particularly agreeable to him. I shall enforce this truth by three reasons.

First, because the time of youth First reason. is the beginning of life. Now it is certain, that in all things God demands particularly the first and beginnings. He ordain'd for this reason in the ancient law, that the first-fruits of all things should be offer'd to him. Of fruits, he requir'd the first gather'd to be presented; of beasts, the first brought forth to be facrificed; and of men, the eldest sons to be presented in his temple to serve there, permitting them afterwards to be redeemed; shewing by this institution, that tho' all things equally appertain unto him, yet he had a special esteem for the first, as those which above all others were due unto/him, and which he requir'd as an acknowledgment. Whence it evidently follows, that the time of youth being the beginning and first part of our life, God demands it particularly, and will have it offer'd unto him, to be faithfully employ'd in his fervice.

Secondly,

Secondly, the time of youth is Second reason.

most pleasing to God, because generally speaking, according to the natural order of things, it is the most innocent part of life, and least corrupted by sin: for in that time, the knowledge of evil is not so extensive, nor is there so much ability or opportunity to commit it: The judgment is not perverted by the salse maxims of the world, nor the inclinations corrupted by the infection of the wicked, as in a more advanced age. Besides, the grace received in baptism being yet fresh, renders that age more agreeable to God, at least in those, who do not trample under their feet that grace, and robe of innocence, by a finful life.

But take notice, Theotime, I said, that age is less corrupted, commonly speaking, and according to the natural order of things; yet it is but too true, that many times much corruption is found therein; but this against the order nature hath established, which hath given that age for its portion, a simplicity of mind, and innocence of manners; and they are so much the more guilty, who by their malice and depravity corrupt the good dispositions nature has bestow'd upon it, learning wickedness, and running after it, in an age when nature herself teaches nothing but sim-

plicity and innocence.

The third reason which declares that Third reason.

God particularly defires to be ferv'd

by you in your youth, dear Theotime, is, that it is the time affording the most opportunities of shewing you love God sincerely: for it is the time of the first temptations, whereby you begin to be sollicited to renounce his love and service. You are hurried on by your own passions, then in their prime violence; invited by those of your age, who often sollicit you to wickedness, either by their example or by their discourse: prompted by the enemy of your salvation, who uses all his endeavours to withdraw you from

the fervice of God, and make fure of you betimes. So that this age may properly be called the time of combat and trial; wherein you hew you love God with a constant and real affection, if you couragiously resist those first assaults. S. Cypr. lib. de mortalitate, savs. It is but a small thing to be brave in time of peace, to shew courage when one is not attack'd, not to commit wickedness when one is not tempted; but to refift evil, and fly from fin in the time of temptation, and in an age when strongly sollicited to abandon the cause of God, is a real proof of true virtue, and an affur'd

mark that one loves God above all things.

These reasons, Theotime, convince us that God hath a fpecial affection for the homage of youth, which being employed in flying from fin, and ferving God, is an age the most agreeable that can be offer'd unto him. And as a learned author fays excellently well, (Hugo àSanEt. ViEt.) those who in the time of youth overcome themselves, refifting couragiously temptation to fin, and confecrate themselves entirely to the service of God, offer in their youth a continual facrifice, presenting a living victim, and a most agreeable offering to God without fpot, fince they have a horror for the uncleanness of fin, and make a perfect oblation in all points. O Theotime, retain well this truth in your mind, and never forget it.

CHAP. IV.

That God particularly loves young people, and delights to bestow many favours upon them.

Fourthcon- Say moreover, Theotime, that God fideration for I not only earnestly defires to be ferving God in ferv'd by you in your youth, but loves youth. you in that age with a particular kindnonevial mornels, and delights to bestow upon you more favours at that time than any other, to affift you tiffe

you in serving him, and to draw you to it more powerfully. This truth is no less certain than the former;

fee how I prove it.

God is pleas'd particularly to affift by his grace three forts of persons; the weak, the simple, (that is, those who have least knowledge of evil) and the bumble. The Weak, because there the force of his grace doth most appear. Job. viii. The Simple, because having less knowledge of evil, they commonly least resist the grace of God, who, as the sacred scripture says, Rejects not the simple, nor stretcheth out his hand to affift the wicked; Prov. iii. The Humble, because as the chief obstacle of the grace of God is Pride, so the best disposition to obtain it, is Humility, according to that saying of scripture, God resists the proud, and gives

grace to the humble; Ja. iv.

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Now these three qualities generally occur in youth; there is found in youth the most weakness, not only of body but mind, the judgment not being as yet well form'd by knowledge and experience, nor the will fufficiently fixed against impressions contrary to its good. There is in youth more fimplicity, having less knowledge of evil, and less discernment than in a more advanc'd age. There is also in youth more humility, which is as it were natural to that age, fram'd for fubjection and obedience; and if pride be found, as it happens but too often, in young minds, it is by an extream corruption, which subverts the order of things, and destroys nature itself. Hence it manifestly follows, that God, who delights in showing his bounty to those who have most need of it, and do not render themselves undeserving, is pleas'd to communicate many favours to young people, inspiring them with good thoughts and defires, and all other affiftances of his grace. Provided, they do not refift him by their wicked life, nor make themselves unworthy, by corrupting the innocence of their age thro' the malice of their mind, and by the multitude of their fins.

For confirmation of this truth, there needs no other testimony than experience, which places it in the cleareft light. Alas ! Theotime, how many are there, who coming to man's effate, find in themselves a great change, no longer experiencing the many favours they received in their youth? Then holy inspirations were frequent, good defires and pious resolutions were familiar to them; they were averse to evil, goodness was agreedble to them, virtue was fweet, and its precepts eafy. But now they find that all these things are chang'd; inspirations more rare, sin causes in them a less horror; devotion becomes cold, and fometimes totally extinct, by a fad alteration, which makes them with much reason regret the time past, and favours lost, in those words of Job, Who will shew me the time past, and the state wherein I was in my youth, when God was with me by the assistance of his grace? Job xxix.

S. Augustin dreadfully experienced this change in his own person, as he himself acknowledges in his confesfions; for he faith, that falling fick when he was yet a youth, he demanded baptism with great earnestness and devotion, which was deferr'd for some particular reasons. Aug. 1. 1. Confess. c. 19. And that in another great sickness when about thirty years of age, he never thought of asking for it. O Theotime, I beseech God that this change and regret never befall you, the cafe of too many, and shews clearly the love God bears to young persons, and which he withdraws from them, when they by abusing his favours make them-felves unworthy. Ibid. lib. 5. cap. 9.

But if you will yet have a convincing and demonstrative proof of the particular love God bears young people, consider what the son of God did upon this occasion whilst he was in the world. Besides that he would become himself a child, and pass thro' all the degrees of age, of infancy, of childhood, of youth, he being able to dispense with himself, and become a perfect man at his first entrance into the world, how often

often did hey during his life, teftify his love and tenderness for that age? The gospel recounts in many places, (Math. xix. Marc. x. Luc. xviii.) how he frequently call'd to him little children, and commanded they should be permitted to approach to him the reproved fuch as hinder'd their coming to him, faying, that it was to them that the kingdom of heaven did appertain : Suffer little ones to come to me, for to Juch belongs the kingdom of beaven. He embrac'd them with an admirable tenderness, and fent them not back till he had laid his hands upon them, and given them his holy benediction; Marc. xx.

The most remarkable cures he wrought were in favour of young people; fuch was the fon of the king, who was ready to expire, in John, chap. iv. Another who was tormented by the devil, Mat. xvii. The fervant of the centurion, and the daughter of the Cananean. Industrian channels bas sould

Of the three dead which he rais'd to life, two were very young, viz. the daughter of Jairus, and the fon of the widow of Naim; and the third, who was Lazarus, was not in years. Of the twelve apostles, he lov'd particularly the youngest, which was S. John.

an Laffly, what greater proofs can we have of the love Jesus Christ bears young people, than these two I am

ferving bim in and benefits, is to Schoitnemotoniog

The first is, the affurance he hath given, that all the favours which shall be bestow'd upon them, shall be accounted as done to himself. He (fays he) that meceives a little one in my name, receives me. Mat. xvili.

The fecond is, that dreadful menace which he afterwards atterd against those who pervert little ones, that is, who draw them into find If any one (fays he) foundalize the little ones who believe in me, it were better a mill flone were ty'd about bis neck, and he cast into the depth of the fear, Mat xviii. Is not this , a great token of the fingular affection fefus Christ bears to young foulsprince he fpeaks with for much zeal and promile indignaindignation against those who cassist in withdrawing then from his fervice? log and from tall not and

These, dear Theotime, are convincing proofs of the love God has for you in your youth. After these affurances, can you refuse the love and service he demands of you in this age? Doubtless you cannot without an extreme ingratitude, and without offering him a most enormous affront, as you are going to see. belowe the hing dan of bacen. He embraced tham

fill he had laid by ha qs App tom, and given them

That they who do not confecrate themselves to God in their grid off to do of any doubt beinous injury.

with an admirable tendelneis, and leve them nor back

Fifth con- His truth evidently follows from fideration for Livthe two former; for if it be true, ferving Godin as we have manifested, that God deyouth. fires and demands particularly the ferand own still evice of young people, and hath an

extreme love for that age, bestowing very singular favours to affift, and invite it to his service; it fol-

ed refule and lows, that to refule him the fervice he The injury defires, and demands with so much that is done to juffice, and not to answer the love he God by not teffifies to youth by so many favours ferving bim in and benefits, is to offer him a most that age. heinous and enormous affront. But then med because this truth is of such conse-

quence, that it can never be sufficiently inculcated, I shall make you fee it more distinctly by the three following confiderations, which I befeech you to examine well.

sono simil proviscio Not to confecrate your youth to First reason the service of God, is to take away a of this injury. certain and affured time, which you the far of his may give him, to referve him an un-

certain, which you are not fure to have, and which is not in your power, viz. the time to come. This is the first degree of the injury you offer to God. You promife indignapromise God to serve him when you are older. Who hath told you that you shall live any time? If you are not certain of being alive to morrow, how are you sure of living ten years? There are more who die before twenty or twenty five years of age than after. Now if you have no assurance of living a long time, is it not a great injury to God, to promise him a time not in your power, and resuse him the time present, which you enjoy? Do you not think, Theotime, he mocks God, who acts in this manner? And doth he not evidently manifest that he hath no design to serve him, if he desers consecrating himself to him till a time which perhaps may never come?

2. You not only referve an uncertain time for God, but take away the bet- Second reason.

ter to give him the worfe For refufing to ferve God, and apply yourfelf to virtue in your youth, (which is, as we faid before, commonly less deprav'd by vice, and most favour'd by heaven,) you referve yourfelf to a time wherein all things conspire to hinder you, and render you unfit for good, and the practice of virtue. The infirmities of the body which daily encrease, the inveterate vicious habits wherein you will be engag'd, the perplexity of worldly affairs, the folicitude of temporal things, the spirit and maxims of the world, which you have embraced: The world, which (as S. John fays, I Joh.v.) is entirely plung'd in vice and corruption, which breathes after nothing but pleasures, covetousness, pride, and has no more thought of falvation and eternity, than if there were no fuch things at all.

All these things will be so many obstacles to your salvation, and absolutely divert you from the service of God, if you do not prevent them in good time, by applying yourself in your youth to the avoiding of sin, and the practice of virtue. Judge then of the injuries you do to God, deferring to serve him to a time when so many things conspire against it, and refusing

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er advantages present themselves. Doubtless this is a grievous injury; yet this is not all, take notice of what follows.

That which completes the enormity Third reason. of the injury offer'd to God, is, that refusing to serve him in your youth, you delay it till you have wearied yourself in the persuit of pleasure, satiated your passions, and given full scope to the wicked inclinations of your age; so that the time you reserve, is but the remnant of what you have employed in sin, and the service of the devil.

Do you comprehend, Theotime, the heinoufriefs of this injury, and the indignity with which you treat your God, and your creator ? T' Cor. iii. Your foul is defign'd to be the temple and dwelling of God; and you will not receive him, till after you have a long time profituted it to the devil, and defil'dit with a vaft number of crimes. All your life ought to be confecrated to the fervice of God, and will you employ the first and better part in the fervice of the devil, referving to God only that which is useless to fin? Can there be an indignity equal to this? What would you fay of a man that would ferve up to the table of a prince. nothing but the leavings of dogs and fwines? This you would fay was horrible; and have you not a horror for the same thing, which you perform far more criminally towards God, keeping for his fervice only the age wherein you can no longer gratify the passions you have to brutifuly cloy'd during your youth? Is not this a horrible affront you offer to God? If God complain'd fo much of those in the old law, who offer di upon this altar profane and unclean bread what complaints will he not make of you, who shall offer unto him only the remnant of your life, defil'd with all fort of filth? If he pronounces a curfe upon him who retains the better part for himfelf, and prefents the work to him in facrifice ; Carfed Tlays he) is the

the deceiver, who chufeth the lame to make an offering of it to God; Mal. iv What maledictions ought not you to stand in dread of, you who not only facrifice to him the worst, but make it your defign to givehim nothing but the remainder of what hath ferv'd to pleasure and the disorders of your youth? I would to God we had not feen fo many effects of this curse of God upon many young people, as we take notice of every day, by dreadful accidents, fudden deaths, rejecting of God, obdurateness in vice, and many other misfortunes, which are the effects of thy choler, O almighty God I by which thou daily punishest those who forget thee in their youth to follow their wicked inclinations, and who would not ferve thee but after they had ferv'd fin, their passions, and the devil.

and be had done IVer Ad P. Ad P. This fin, altho

for a fin of impurity re had committed, which the felip

detelled by God, handelf, and charles d with 10 exten-What an aversion God bath to wicked young people. with it delid Remarkable examples of it amos out and

A Fter what we have faid, there is Sixth confino need of proving this propo- deration, the fition, which is a necessary consequence wrath of God from the three former: for how can against vicious it be but that God should have an ex- young persons. treme aversion to those, who contemn

the honour he does them, in particularly defiring their fervice; who are not mov'd with the love he bears them, and who on the contrary treat him with fo much indignity and contempt as we have flewn? God hath an aversion to all sinners, as he himself hath faid; Aversor Impium, I detest the wicked. But chiefly those to whom he hath testify'd most love and benevolence, and who unworthily abuse it. Love offended is chang'd into indignation, and bounty despis'd becomes a merciless disdain. I ... bod to ship and a

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That this is so, besides those reasons which clearly demonstrate it, experience evinces it with undoubted certainty, by the effects which God frequently shews of that aversion he hath to vicious young people. I shall recount here sour very remarkable examples out of the sacred scripture, that no one may doubt them, and that from these one may judge of others.

The first example is of the two children of Judas, the son of the patriarch Jacob. This man had seven children, the two elder whereof were wicked and vicious. Behold what the scripture saith of the first, whose name was Her; Her, the eldest son of Judas, was wieked in the sight of God, and be destroy'd him. Gen. xxxviii. And immediately after it is said of the second, nam'd Onan, that God struck him with death for a sin of impurityhe had committed, which the scripture there calls detestable. God struck him with death, because he had done a detestable action. This sin, although detested by God himself, and chastis'd with so exemplary a punishment, by a deplorable missortune, is but too common among youth, upon which it draws the divine indignation either visibly or invisibly.

The fecond example is of the two children of the high priest Heli, call'd Ophni and Phinees; I Kings hii. and iv. These two young men were employ'd by their father in the ministry of the temple and facrifices, wherein they behav'd themselves very ill, committing great irreverences in the temple, and crying injustices towards the faithful, who came to offer their facrifices to God, requiring from them, by an infatiable avarice, more than justly was their due : infomuch that the facred scripture fays they were the children of Belial; (so it calls those whom it would fignify to be wicked, and absolutely ruin'd : for Belial signifies absque jugo, that is, without restraint or fear) having loft the fear of God, and the remembrance of their duty stand it adds, that their fin was very enormous in the fight of God. Their iniquity provok'd God

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fo much, that he fent Samuel to tell their father too negligent in correcting his children, that he would take a revenge which should serve as an example to all posterity ; that he would exclude his family from . the high priesthood to give to another; that his offforing should die in the flower of their youth, and few should arrive at perfect age; and that his two fons, Ophni and Phinees, should die both in one day, and that all their race should bear for ever the marks of their iniquity, which should never be expiated by victims and facrifices. The best worth of I were brought

All this happen'd as was foretold. A little while after Ophni and Phinees were kill'd, being defeated by the Philistians. On the same day the father, hearing the news of their death, fell down backward, broke his skull, and dy'd upon the spot. Many other misfortunes happen'd that day, and among the rest, the ark of the testament was taken by the enemies; and the rest of the prediction was fulfill'd a little after. How many misfortunes in one family, thro' the wickedness of two fons! I hamistong saw

The third example is of Amnon, the eldest fon of David. 2 Kings xiii. The feripture recounts but one wicked action of his, yet that one so black and detestable, that it necessarily supposes many others; it being certain, that a man never ascends on a sudden to the height of impiety, and that great crimes are the effect of a foul abandon'd by God for her precedent sins. This young prince neglecting to curb his inclinations, permitted his heart to be overcome with unchaste love, in such a manner, that this brutal passion, which generally promotes heinous extremities and enormous crimes, making him break thro' the most inviolable laws of nature, brought him to love unchaftly his own fifter; and not obtaining her confent to fuch an abominable proposal, he adds force to luft, committing in one action two most enormous crimes, violence and incest the son bluos no shor on clauo

But

But the divine justice soon show'd how much it abhorr'd the crimes and wicked life of this young prince: for two years after he was killed by his own brother Absalom, who had meditated this revenge all that time. O God, how terrible are thy judgments!

The fourth is of Absalom, the third son of David. who was no better than his brother Amnon 32 Kings xiii. and xiv. He was proud, diffembling, revengeful, and highly ambitious, conceited of himfelf, and his own beauty, which, according to the scripture, was extraordinary. The first wicked action which the scripture relates of him, but which must needs have been preceded by many others, is the murther of his brother Amnon, an abominable crime. By this action he loft his father's favour, and was banished from him for the space of five years, after which he was recall'd, and admitted to his favour again. He was scarcereturn'd to his father's court, when he contriv'd a grand rebellion against him : and having by his addresses gain'd the affection of the people, he retir'd to a small town, and was proclaim'd king. After this he takes up arms against his father, forces him to fly from Jerusalem, and perfues him with a ftrong army, which he had rais'd to deprive him of his crown. What will the divine justice do here? Will it connive at such a degenerate child? Learn, Theotime, what the facred feripture relates. David seeing himself brought to such streights by his fon, was obliged to make head and oppose him. He fets in order the few forces he had with him, fends them to fight, gives him battle. Abfalom's men, tho' far more numerous, are defeated on in evol effections

In this discomsture (Q the divine judgments!) it happen'd that Abfalom, endeavouring to fave himself by flight, was carry'd under a great oak, and as he wore his locks very long, his hair by a strange accident, and particular permission of God, was so strongly entangled in the branches of the tree, that the mule he rode on could not carry him away, but continuing its courfe

course, left him hanging by his hair, without being able to disengage himself. David's soldiers seeing him in this condition, ran him thro' with a lance, and killed him on the spot; altho' David, by an astonishing tenderness, sending them to the battle, had expressly forbidden any violence to be offer'd to his person.

O divine justice! thou plainly shewest that thou dost not connive at the iniquities of wicked children; and altho' thou deferreft for a time the chastisement they deserve, to give them leisure to repent, thou afterwards punishest most severely their obstinacy in fin, and the affront they offer to thy goodness, with which thou expecteft their repentance. wol word

Behold, four examples from the facred scripture, which manifest the greatness of God's aversion to vicious young people; the scripture might furnish many others. Ancient histories are full, and daily experience produces but too many examples in these our truth, unknown to the greatest part of men, butsybb

Dal

Take notice of one thing worthy An imporof confideration; that in the four pre- tant remark. cedent examples are inftanced three raignal to

forts of fins, which render young people particularly odious to God, and which generally occasion their ruin. In the first and third, the fin of impurity. In the fecond, the contempt of religion and holy things; to which may be referred the abuse of ecclesiastical benefices by young incumbents, who many times draw upon themselves and their families the divine judgments. In the fourth, the contempt of parents, and rebellion against paternal authority. apply themsalves to virtue in their youth, except if

were to frew of how great importance that time is

Elver comes ? Ecolo, vis. From whence conlesses, that it offices us in the Property, That the young man

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for their falvation?

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That salvation commonly depends on the time of youth.

him on the fpot, altho' David, by an altomining ten-Seventh and W Hat we have faid in the four most important W last chapters, hath laid before motive which you the obligation you have to ferve obliges young God in your youth, out of respect to people to vir- the defire he hath thereof, and the tue. John Jasq love he bears you. A refpect you can't not flight, without being guilty of a

most heinous injury, and incurring his aversion and diffrace. Now I will convince you of this obligation tion from a principle of felf-interest, and shew you clearly, that your salvation hath a great and almost entire dependance on the life you lead during your youth.

I would to God, Theotime, you, and all those of your age, would comprehend, and never forget this truth, unknown to the greatest part of men, but the ignorance of which is the ruin and damnation of many. I wish all men understood, that the immense eternity of happiness or misery, which waits them after this life, depends upon this first time, which all the world despites, and which the most part employs in wickedness to nit ent brid and third, the fin of in aland

To convence you of this truth, I shall produce no less than the fentiment of the facred scripture, that ist of the Holy Ghoft, whole words are fo express, that it is impeffible to doubt of sites visioners mous warb

For why doth it in for many places exhort young people to think of their falvation betimes, and to apply themselves to virtue in their youth, except it were to shew of how great importance that time is for their falvation?

Why does it say in Ecclesiastes; Remember your treator in the days of your youth, before the time of af-fliction comes? Eccles. xii. From whence comes it, that it affures us in the Proverbs, That the young man

Mall

shall continue even until bis old age in the way be bas once enter'd; Prov. xii. that is, the manner of life which he has begun? Wherefore doth it fay by the prophet Feremy, That it is good for a man to carry the yoke from bis youth; Lam. iii, that is, ito addict himself to virtue, and to bear the pleasing yoke of God's commandments? this broost off ball

Why in Ecclesiasticus doth it exhort young people fo powerfully to virtue, by those excellent words, able to win the most insensible hearts? Son, receive instructions from your youth, and you shall find wisdom even to the end of your life: approach unto it as he who would cultivate the earth, that is, with care and labour, and expect the pleasing fruit which it will bring you. You will labour a little to obtain it, but Joon after you will taste its admirable fruits. 'Tis true. virtue is bard and difficult, but it is only fo to those who are insensible and vicious. But those who have once known it, find it pleasing, and never part with it any more, and it will continue with them even to the last accomplishment of their salvation in eternal glory. Eccl. vi. And all the rest of that chapter is but a continual exhortation to young people to be virtuous.

Wherefore in the twenty fifth chapter doth it fay, that lit is impossible to find in old age, what was not laid up in youth Fromen's villes for our bus somit mol

And laftly, among the books of facred fcripture, why was there one expressly made for the instruction of youth, which is that of Proverbs? Doth not all this manifestly discover, that the Holy Ghost would give men to understand that the time of youth is of greater consequence than the greatest part imagine; and that all happiness or misery of man, whether in this life or in the next, depends generally on that time well or ill employ'd; it being commonly certain, that those obtain their salvation, who in their youth are bred up in the fear of God, and observance of his commandments; and that those who have

not been educated in this fear of God, or cast it from them to follow fin with greater liberty, do misfor-

All this truth is grounded on these two foundations. The first is, that those who have followed virtue in their youth, eafily persevere the remainder of their life. And the fecond, that on the contrary, those who have given themselves over to fin at that time, with great difficulty amend, and frequently never. We shall display these two truths still more at large.

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That those who have followed virtue in their youth, commonly with ease persevere in goodness the rest of their dife. A said way to the break it suited

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Eighth mo- Xperience renders this proposition tive. fo evident, that it is taken for granted in the fentiments of the facred scripture and all wife men. To make you more sensible of it, I shall lay before you the reasons thereof, built upon both those authorities

The first is, that habits acquir'd in youth last a

long time, and are not eafily furmounted.

This is clear from the holy scripture. The young man will not leave in his old age the manner of living be bath once begun, Prov. xxii. that is, very rarely. It is past dispute, that the first impressions are strong, and the first habits deeply rooted in young fouls. The first impressions of young minds (faith S. Ferom, Ep. ad Læt.) are very hardly effaced; Wool which hath taken its first tineture, doth not easily return to its former candor; and an earthen vessel keeps long the smell and taste of that liquor wherewith it was first seasoned. For this reason the scripture says, That it is good, that is to say, very important, for a man to addict himself

to virtue in bis youth: Lam. iii. because having acquir'd it in that time, it is easily preserv'd the remainder of one's life: as it says in another place, Receive instruction in your youth, and you shall find wisdom even unto the end of your life; Eccl. vi.

S. Bernard fays, (lib. de ord. vitæ.) That we need not feekany cause why we see so many old men full of vices, and destitute of all forts of virtues, but because they acquir'd them not in their youth, which is the pro-per time. And S. Ferom (Epift. ad Nepot.) describing the excellent qualities of old age in those who apply'd themselves to learning and virtue in their youth, saith, That they become more knowing by their age, more afsur'd by experience, wiser by process of time, and gather the agreeable fruits of the ancient labours of their youth.

The fecond reason is, because, as we said above, youth is the time of trial and temptations, which being overcome, we eafily furmount all that follow.

The temptations of impurity are without question the most violent, the trials frequent, but victories very rare, fays S. Austin (Serm. 250. de temp.) They have shaken the constancy of those whom torments could not overcome, as S. Ferom (in vit. Paul.) observes. Now altho' these temptations are common to all ages, yet it is most certain, that they are ordinarily stronger and more frequent in youth, which, as S. Ferom (Epist. ad Nepot.) says, is a continual combat of chastity; and being environ'd with the occasions of fin, and urg'd by the provocations of the flesh, it suffers very much in preserving its purity, like fire almost extin-guish'd with green wood heap'd upon it.

But when by the affiftance of divine grace, which, as we have shewn above, is greater and more abundant in youth, the victory is gain'd in these first encounters; the other trials which are to be undergone in the course of life, which according to facred scripture is a per-petual combat, (Job vii.) are surmounted with far less difficulty.

The reason is, because temptations diminish in proportion as they are overcome; divine grace encreases, by how much better use is made of it; and a heart accustom'd to conquer, yields not easily, since it daily acquires new strength by its victories. Sampson having exerted himself in fighting with a lion, became invincible. And David having in his youth surmounted lions and bears, he afterwards, tho' very young, overthrew the giant Goliab, the terror of Israel, and was never overcome in all the battles in which he engaged.

O dear Theotime, if you knew the repose and tranquillity they enjoy, who have behav'd themselves gallantly in the combats of their youth, the desire of partaking of that peace would powerfully encourage you to resist with all your vigour! Learn it from the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the wise man: Son, says he, seek wisdom, and you shall find it; and when you have found it, never part with it; you will find init repose all your life; and after some trouble it will be changed into contentment and joy: its chains by which it will bind you to the service of God, will serve as a powerful protestion, and a solid foundation of a virtuous life. Eccl. vi

I add the third reason, which is, that God augments his graces, and multiplies his blessings upon those who have happily conquer'd in their youth, to preserve them in the good path they have enter'd by

his grace.

I cannot prove this truth better, than by producing the assurance which God himself gives you in the sacred scripture. Our lord, says the wise man, gives wisdom, and from his mouth issues prudence and science. And he not only giveth it, but takes care to continue it; for it is he who guards the salvation of the just, and protests those who walk in virtue. He adds afterwards, Son, if wisdom enter into your heart, and science please you, (he speaks of the science of virtue) counsel and prudence will preserve you, delivering you from the road

of vice, from the company of the wicked, and from the enticements of immodest women, maintaining you in the

path of virtue, and in the way of the just.

There are a great number of like passages in sacred scripture, which assure us of that singular protection and assistance of God towards those who follow virtue in their youth, and it is easy to confirm them by examples from the same scripture.

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This truth confirmed by remarkable examples, taken out of facred scripture, of those who having been virtuous in their youth, continued so all their life; and chiefly of those who have resisted great temptations.

THE first example I shall produce First examist that of Foseph, a model of vir- ple, of Joseph.

tue in his youth ; Gen, xxxvii. At fix-

teen years of age he abhorred vice in fuch a manner, that the wicked example of his brothers could never corrupt his innocence; on the contrary, not being able to endure their wickedness, he gave notice thereof to his father Jacob. The greatness of his virtue, for which he was fingularly favour'd by God. and tenderly lov'd by his father, drew upon him the enmity of his brothers, even to fuch a height, that they fought nothing less than to destroy him at any rate. Meeting him one day in the fields, they conspir'd to murther him; but having a horror of dipping their hands in his blood, they refolv'd to let him down into an old ciftern, defigning to leave him there to perifh. This poor child, unable to foften the cruelty of his brothers by prayers and tears, was constrain'd to yield, putting all his confidence in God, who never abandons those who love him. In this he was not deceiv'd i for his inhuman brothers, mov'd with withels

the horror of so barbarous a crime, chang'd their first resolution. The drew him out of the cistern, and sold him to merchants, then passing by, who carry'd him into Egypt, where he was sold to a lord of that country. Joseph being with his master persever'd in virtue and innocence of life, which drew down the blessing of God upon the house of his master, who soon disdover'd his merit, and took a great affection to him.

Behold how Joseph spent the first part of his youth, that is, until the age of twenty or two and twenty years. See the consequence of it, and how he passed the rest of his life; wherein I observe three remarks able occasions, in which his virtue underwent the severest trial.

The first was about that age when he sustain'd the most violent attack that chastity could undergo, being solicited by his master's wife to consent to a detestable adultery; but the fear of God, wherein he had been bred up, gave him such a horror of the crime, that all the importunity and violence of that lewd woman could never stagger his chastity, which

fince has been an example to all ages. It aid iquito

From this temptation he fell into a greater : for this wicked woman not being able to compass her impious defign, accused him of attempting her chastity, imposing falsly upon him the crime she herself had committed. His master provok'd at this, order'd him to be bound and cast into prison, where he continu'd to the age of thirty. This was a fevere temptation, and a shock which might easily have overturn'd a virtue but lately cultivated; to be accus'd and deem'd guilty of a crime he abominated, and to fuffer as if he had committed it! But Fofeph continued immoveable in his first virtue; and as he had learn'd patience in his youth by the perfecution of his brothers, he fuffer'd this with an admirable constancy, comforting thimself in his innocence, of which God was both the witness

witness and protector t and God, who had always been with him, left him not on this occasion; but, as the facred scripture says, Wifd. xv. descended with him into the ciftern, affifting him with his grace, and wonderfully delivering him, as he did presently after.

To these two trials succeeded the third, yet greater. This was the great flation to which he was rais'd : for having interpreted Pharaob's dream by the knowledge God gave him of things to come, this king not only deliver'd him out of prison, but made him the first man in his kingdom, over which he gave him a general charge, with absolute power to dispose of all things according to his will, commanding his subjects to obey him as himfelf. Gen. xli. In this high station, which generally dazzles men's eyes, and foon deftroys an ordinary share of virtue, Joseph remain'd firm in his primitive innocence, always like himself. Forgetfulness of God, pride, covetousness, revenge, the usual attendants on unlimited power, could never find admittance in his breast. Having an opportunity of revenging himself on his brothers, who came into Egypt to buy provifion during a fevere famine, he not only omitted it, but received them with fuch tenderness and marks of affection, as draws tears from those who read the account the scripture gives of it. He carried himself in his charge with so much justice, (Gen. xlv.) that no complaint was ever made of his conduct; on the contrary the Egyptians proclaim'd him their deliverer, being freed from want during a feven years famine, by his great prudence, for which he was entituled in those countries, The faviour of the world. He persevered thus in virtue and the fear of God, in the midst of grandeur, from the age of thirty, when he was rais'd to that fortune, even to the age of an hundred and ten, wherein he dy'd. O Theotime, reflect well upon this example, and learn from it, what virtue acquir'd in youth is able to effect. banny at a mobania and D

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I should content myself with this example, if that which sollows were not also admirably well adapted to the same purpose. It is of Toby, the father of young Toby, of whom the scripture reports such wonders perform'd first in his youth, and afterwards in the course of his life. Hear what it Tays.

Second exam
Toby was a young man of the tribe and ple, of Toby. city of Nephthali; Tob. ii. and altho' he were the youngest of all his tribe, yet nothing childish or youthful appear'd in his actions. And when all others went to sacrifice to the golden calf of feroboam king of Israel, he avoided their company, went alone to ferusalem to the temple of the Lord, and there ador'd the God of Israel, offering to him saithfully his sirst-fruits and tenths. He perform'd these things, adds the scripture, and many other such like, according to the law of God, being yet very young.

O the admirable life, Theotime, of a young man, who acted nothing childish, that is, nothing contrary to virtue; who permitted not himself to be carry'd away by the torrent of ill example, continuing sted-fast in the service of God, when the rest to a man abandoned their creator! A youth spent so virtuously, could not but be followed by a holy life, as you shall

e with to much inflice. (Gen. only.) that .sel

Toby being come to man's estate was led captive by the Asyrians, with all his countrymen, to the city of Ninive: being there, he departed not from the path of virtue which he had so happily enter'd in his youth.

For first, as he had learn'd in his youth to resist the wicked example of others, he permitted not himself to be corrupted in his captivity by the example of his countrymen, who eat licentiously the meat of Gentiles, the prohibited by the law of God.

Secondly, having deserved a particular regard from the Asyrian king by his virtuous conduct, he had leave to go to any part of the kingdom: he visited his fellow captives, admonishing them concerning their selvation, sand their perseverances in the service of God.

Thirdly, the affliction of the captives encreasing, he daily visited and comforted them, distributing what she was able to give them, fed the hungry, cloath'd the naked, and with an unparallell'd charity buried all the dead herfound, notwithstanding the displeasure of the king, which he had incurr'd by that action; even to the danger of his life. | But what is yet more admirable, is, the patience with which he bore the melanchaly affliction of blindness, which Abefell him by an unexpected accident in the fifty-fixth year of his age. One day, as he return'd home weary'd with the burial of many dead, he chanc'd to fall afleep under a wall, from the top whereof the dung out of a fwallow's nest fell upon his eyes, and took away his fight. This was doubtlefs a very great affliction, and a most rigorous trial; but he supported it with such an admirable patience, that the facred scripture compares it to that of Job, and, what is very remarkable, attributes it to the piety and fear of God he cultivated in his youth. Behold what it fays; Now God permitted that this trial should befall bim, to give to posterity an example of bis patience, like that of boly Job: for whereas be always feared God from his youth, and kept his commandments, be complain'd not against God for the affliction of blindness sent bim, but continued immoveable in the fear of God, giving bim thanks all the days of bis life. Tob. xiv. O how admirable is the effect of virtue, which hath always increased with age! He was deliver'd from this affliction four years after, and living to the age of 110, he dy'd in peace, after he had made, as the scripture observes, a continual progress in the fear and service of God. Thus, Theotime, do they live, thus do they die, who have followed virtue in their youth.

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Third exam- on freamot finish this chapter, tho alple, of Eleazar! ready too long, without a third example in the person of that great martyr of the old testament, Eleazar. oz Machab! vi. He was an ancient man, very venerable for the number of his years, but more for his virtue, which he had cultivated from his infancy. When king Antiothus persecuted the Jews, to make them renounce their religion, and the adoration of the true God, this holy man was apprehended to be conftrain'd thereto by force of torments, which could never shake his ancient piety. And when some of the standersby exhorted him to comply, at least in appearance, to free himself from the torture; the scripture faith, that he took into confideration the dignity of his age, now grown gray in virtue, not having committed any thing unworthy of a true fon of Abraham, and the religious life be bad led from bis infancy; and having reflected on these things, he immediately anfwer'd with an invincible courage, that he would rather die, than confent to fuch a criminal action : upon which his torments were redoubled, and he fuffer'd

Learn, dear Theotime, from this example and the preceding, what virtue acquired in youth is able to do, when confirmed by a continual exercise of good actions; and labour to be such now, as you would wish to be

all the remainder of your life. It to soll in soll and

the days of his life X of A. H.D. was thanks a

That those who have been addicted to vice in their youth amend with great difficulty, and often never, miserably throwing themselves away for all eternity.

Ninth motive, of greateft importance for living well during youth. O Theotime, that I had a pen capable of imprinting this important truth more lastingly in your heart than in brass or marble, and making you perfectly comprehend the great and dread-

ful difficulty of amendment after a youth spent in vice!

A difficulty to express it; and on the other side so general, that we cannot consider it attentively, without being touch'd with a lively forrow, seeing such numbers of Christians, and principally of young people, who groan under the tyranny of a vicious habit, which being contracted in their youth, and encreas'd with age, leads them to perdition; from which if they chance to recover, it is with incredible pains and combats, and by a manifest miracle of divine grace. Learn, O dear Theotime, to avoid this danger, and endeavour to comprehend the greatness, either entirely to prevent it, or quickly to withdraw yourself, if you be already engaged therein.

This great difficulty springs from three causes. The first is the incredible power and sorce of a wicked habit, which being once rooted in the soul, cannot be pluck'd up but with great trouble. All habits have commonly this quality, that they continue a long time, and are very hardly destroy'd. But amongst others, wicked habits are such as adhere more strongly, and are not so easily chang'd; because corrupt nature is more prone to evil than good. Hence the scripture says, That the wicked amend with great difficulty, which makes the number of fools, that is, of sinners, infinite.

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But among wicked habits, those contracted in youth are the strongest, and with most difficulty overcome: for the passions, which are the instruments of vice, unrestrain'd at that time by virtue, encrease with age, and as they encrease augment and fortify vice, giving it dailynew force, and rendering it at length unconquerable.

For this reason the same scripture, in order to express the force of a vicious habit contracted in youth, delivers a sentence which young people ought to have frequently before their eyes. Off a ejus implebuntur vi-

tus

this adolescentia ejus, & cum eo in pulvere dormient; The wicked shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall follow him to his grave; Job xx. That is, the vices and wicked habits of youth become so deep-ly rooted in the soul, that all the remainder of life is tainted by them, and death alone, as we daily see,

can put a final period to them. the sensitived to erec

The cause is very evident; for vice when in possession of a soul, encreases and strengthens the passions, the passions corrupt the judgment, so that it mistakes good for evil and evil for good: the judgment corrupted perverts the will, which runs blindly into sin, and from thence proceeds all the evil, because, as S. Augustin (lib. 8. confess cap. 3.) says, The will being depraved, settles its affection, and takes pleasure in ill. Pleasure produceth a custom, and a custom not resisted becomes a necessity, that is, an extreme difficulty in avoiding sin. And when a soul is arrived at this point, there are no hopes of her amendment; because as another author (S. Isid.) adds, Necessity is the mother of death, bringing him who lies under it to final impenitence.

The fecond cause of this great difficulty, is the decrease of divine grace: for as God multiplies his savours to those who receive them with humility, and employ them for their salvation; so he diminishes them to those who abuse and contemn them. Now if he deals thus with mankind in general, much more with young men; on whom as he bestows many favours when they worthily dispose themselves, as we have said above, so he withdraws his kindnesses when they abuse them, as we have made appear by the experience of those, who having been favour'd with particular obligations from God in their youth, are presently after sensible of a great diminution of those favours, occasion'd by the ill use they have made of them.

God himself threatens this by a prophet, when he speaks thus; Young people shall perish with thirst, who swear

feelion of adoring the idols which the city of Samaria adores. This thirst is not only a corporal, but a spiritual thirst, and the want of divine grace, of which it is spoken immediately before; I will send a famine upon the earth, not a samine of bread, nor a scarcity

of water, but of the word of God.

The third cause of the great difficulty of correcting the ill habits contracted in youth, is the power of the devil, which encreases in proportion with the vicious habits, and divine favours diminish'd, in punishment of fins committed. This is the proper effect of fin, which depriving a foul of the grace and protection of her creator, subject her to the dominion of the devil, and engage her more and more in that unhappy flavery, in proportion as the continues in vice. O Theotime, who can sufficiently express the deplorable state of a foul reduc'd to that servitude, under the tyranny of her mortal enemy, who employs all his engines and devices to destroy her without recovery; suggesting all the temptations to her, which draw her into fin; furnishing her daily with new occasions of destruction; diverting her from those that might withdraw her from disorder; hurrying her from fin to fin, from one vice to another, till the measure of her iniquities being heap'd up, she by the utmost effect of the divine wrath is abandoned to the eternal perdition the deferves !of had datacy vid to abolishing out

Thus doth this cruel enemy treat those whom he hath under his power, and this by a just permission of God, who thus rejects those who withdraw themselves from his service and friendship, and who resusing to submit themselves to the sweetness of his law, and the abundance of his favours and blessings, most justly deserve to be abandon'd to that cruel master who breathes nothing but their destruction, and will never cease to persecute them till he hath plung'd them into eternal damnation. Fer. lvi. O Theotime, how unhappy are all

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those who are fallen into this deplorable slavery! but yet more miserable those, who being engag'd therein, think not of seeking their deliverance.

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Examples apposite to this subject; and first, of those who have corrected the vices of their youth, yet with very great difficulty.

If this truth is manifest from reason, as we have seen, yet it is more so from experience, which surnishes very sew examples of persons, who after being plung'd in vice during their youth, by a special mercy have been recalled from it. I shall content my-

felf with producing one of the most The exam-considerable, which is that of S. Auple of S. Au-gustin. We have in the person of this gustin. faint, the most remarkable example

antiquity affords, to shew clearly how dissicult a thing it is to correct vices contracted in youth. I shall only relate what he himself says of of it in his confession, by a particular inspiration of God, to teach all young people an abhorrence of vice, and to warn them of the dangers and rocks whereon he unfortunately ran, and prevent that misery wherein the wickedness of his youth had totally engaged him, if God had not withdrawn him by a miracle of his divine mercy, which he hath not shewn to many others.

He faith (lib. 1. confess. cap. 10.) First, that he spent his childhood in all the wicked inclinations that age is capable of, (cap. 12. and 13.) viz. untractableness, disobedience, lying, laziness, inclination for play and pleasure, a disrelish of all that was good, susceptible of every thing contrary to modesty and decency; slying labour, but fond of diversions, learning nothing but

but what he ought not to have known. Such was

his childhood.

These first inclinations, as it usually happens, were follow'd by far greater diforders. Being come to fixteen years of age, (cap. 19.) that mind which had not been restrained in the first disordinate excesses of its nature, hurried him into all the vices of which his age was capable. (Lib. 2. cap. 1.) He (cap. 2.) owns it himself with fighs and lamentations, that sensuality and lascivious passions did so powerfully seize on his heart in that age, that they plung'd him into fins of impurity, even to such a height as is not fit to be express'd; so that neither the fear of God, nor the discreet admonitions of his mother, nor the infamy of fin, nor any other confideration, could lay the least restraint upon him in those early sallies; but on the contrary he became fo ungracious, that he not only lost all shame for vice, (cap. 3.) but took a pride in it, and was asham'd not to be accounted as vicious as the most deprav'd; believing it a great misfortune to be thought innocent, when he heard others glory in their wickedness.

He began this life when he return'd from his fludies, in his father's house, where he dwelt a whole year; after that, he was fent to Carthage to finish his studies, where he continued the same manner of life

till the age of nineteen.

Here, Theotime, you shall take no- Aconsiderable tice by the way of four or five causes remark for of this corruption of S. Augustin in that young men.

age.

D'voso

The first, idleness, wherein he spent his sixteenth year in his father's house, at his return from his studies, which is a time very dangerous for young people, as we shall shew hereafter. Aug. lib. 2. cap. 2.

Secondly, the little care his father took of his behaviour, not concerning himself that his son should be -utilized for boards that there there has beavirtu-

virtuous, so that he became learned and eloquent, as is often the case. Ibid.

Thirdly, the contempt of his mother's admonitions, who knowing her son's disposition, exhorted him continually not to permit himself to be carry'd away by

the excesses of impurity, but to no effect. Ibid.

Fourthly, the wicked example of those of his age so much prevail'd upon his mind, that he endeavour'd to be more impious, to the end he might resemble them; and when he saw himself surpass'd in wickedness, he seign'd some crime which he had never committed, fearing to be contemn'd, by how much he appear'd less vicious than others. Ibid.

Fifthly, the great liberty his parents gave him for play and recreations, as himself also takes notice. Ibid.

These things hurried him into vice, and retain'd him in his disorders the space of three years, after which he began to open his eyes, and acknowledge his miserable state. Here, Theotime, you will discover the immense difficulty of withdrawing from the vices contracted in youth.

Being nineteen years of age, his thoughts began to be serious concerning salvation, which God rais'd in him by reading a book of Cicero, whose title is Hor-

tensius, containing an exhortation to wisdom.

The reading of this book, as he himself saith, chang'd presently his mind and inclinations, and made him turn his thoughts upon God, and alter his desires. He began to contemn temporal and perishable goods and pleasures, and to aspire with an incredible eagerness after the beauty of wisdom, which never perisheth. And from that time he began to depart from vice, and return to God with a most ardent desire. Who would not have believ'd, but that these good motions would have been soon follow'd by a perfect conversion? But alas, Theotime, what is not a wicked habit contracted in youth able to do! Vice and wicked inclinations had so seized his heart, that these thoughts of conversion prov'd

providinessectual. The weight of his inveterate vices replung'd him into his former state, in which he remained from the nineteenth to the thirtieth year of his age; and the vices contracted in three years of his youth, kept him in slavery twelve whole years. During which time he not only remain'd in his former disorders, but fell into others yet greater: for as immodesty leads to error and blindness, he gave into the heresy of Manichaus, wherein he continued nine years, joining to his heresy the keeping of a concubine; in which state he liv'd to the time of his conversion.

Being about thirty years of age, he thought more feriously of his conversion than formerly, as he defcribes it in the fixth book, chap. 11. But hearken, Theotime, with what trouble he compass'd his design.

After that first thought, he remain'd yet above two years in his wicked life, deferring daily, as he saith himself, to be converted unto God, and to seek in him the life of grace, not reflecting on the death he caus'd in himself by his wicked life. Much time was requisite for clearing his understanding, and rooting out the errors of his past life, and convincing himself of the necessity of a conversion, as he relates in his seventh book.

His understanding being convinc'd, his will did not submit. The vicious habits in such a manner posses'd his heart, that they made him dread his amendment, as he himself testifies. He should have rooted out these vices one after another, ambition, covetousness, impurity. Ambition and covetousness were soon banish'd, but that curs'd impurity kept yet a firm possession. Cap. 7.

He was so enslav'd therewith, that he thought it impossible to recover his liberty, accounting it very miferable to be depriv'd of those ignominious pleasures, which are the source of all misfortunes. Lib. 6. cap. 11.

In fine, the difficulty of his conversion was so great, that after many combats, which he underwent in his soul

virtuous, so that he became learned and eloquent, as is often the case. Ibid.

Thirdly, the contempt of his mother's admonitions, who knowing her son's disposition, exhorted him continually not to permit himself to be carry'd away by

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foul during the space of fourteen or fifteen years, after the folicitude, prayers and tears of his pious mother, who had followed him by fea and land from his own country to Carthage, from Carthage to Rome, from Rome to Milan, to retrieve him from his diforders, and gain him to God; (for to her next to God he ow'd his falvation:) After the powerful exhortations of his best friends; after many conferences with the great S. Ambrofe, and other perfons eminent for virtue and learning; after all the interior motions of divine grace, his conversion was completed by a miracle. In the last struggles between nature and grace, a voice from heaven cried aloud to him Tolle, lege; Tolle, lege; Take and read, Take and read; admonishing him to open the New Testament which he had by him. He took it, and having open'd it, found these words of the apostle, by which the Holy Ghost wrought in his foul his entire conversion: Nat in banquetings and drunkenness, not in beds and wantonness, not in strife and emulation; but put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in concupiscences; Rom.xiii. ver. 13. O God, is it possible that the change of a foul should be so difficult! and that vices contracted in youth, should cost so much pains, and so many remedies to cure them! des suise substitution all

This is not yet all, O Theotime; St. Austin being absolutely converted, was not freed from the precedent difficulties: for altho' he never return'd back after his conversion, in consequence whereof he performed an exact penance, and liv'd a holy and angelical life; nevertheles he selt a long time after (lib. 10. cap. 30.) the consequences of his former life, and of frequent and very violent temptations; which being occasion'd by the old habits of his youth, gave him much trouble to preserve himself in holines, according to the account he hath given in the tenth book of his consessions, and following ones, where

where he describes the different temptations with which he was affaulted are sew and one son easy aren't

O Theotime, read again and again this example, confider attentively all the particulars, and fee to what extremity a vicious habit of youth, not refisted in time, is able to carry one. Fly the danger where this faint was like to perish, and where many daily suffer shipwere viscus, and not reporting of them one achanw

There is yet the example of Manaffes in the following chapter, and that of S. Ferome, Part III. cap. 9.

Amongst the kings of Just, who likewis reigned

Josephine.

fix who were goll to A HO Jost hat. Office

to the number of ameteen after delemon, there were

Touchan, Lucibias, fofas, and all the others were Examples of those who have never corrested the vices of youth, and ontinudinor risdt heir life; the greatest part of those who were vicious, began their wicked-

A Sin a shipwreck, where a ship is lost in a storm, there are many who perish, and very few who fave themselves by fwimming or otherwise: thus in the shipwreck of virtue, which many suffer in their youth, the number of those who are entirely destroy'd is very great, and of those who escape very small.

You will understand the smallness of this number, when you shall know, Theotime, that in all the holy hiftory, a thing almost incredible, there is found but one only example, in the person of Manasser king of Juda, whose history I shall give you hereafter; and that for this one it produces a vast number of others, who perish'd in the storm, and died in the vices of their youth; some having liv'd a long time after, others being fnatch'd away by death in the prime of their age. I shall here recount you some examples.

First, of all the kings of Ifrael, who to the number of mineteen reign'd over the ten tribes of Ifrael, after the division that was made of that kingdom from

tat a specification with

that of the tribe of Fuda after the death of Solomon, there was not one but was extremely wicked from his youth, land continued for to his deather . miles of TO

and althor the scripture doth not make express mention of their wouth meverthelessitigives us fufficiently to understand that they were wicked in that age, faying of each of them absolutely, that they were vicious, and not reporting of them one action of virtle, except of one, viz. Jebu, of whom it recounts some good works which he perform'd at first, altho

afterwards he was perverted like the rest.

Amongst the kings of Juda, who likewise reign'd to the number of nineteen after Solomon, there were fix who were good that is, Asa, Josaphat, Osias, Joathan, Ezechias, Josias, and all the others were wicked. Those who were good began from their youth, and continued fuch all their life; the greatest part of those who were vicious, began their wickednefs in their younger years, and never alter'd their I chere are many who perish, and very Bubnes

Thus it is faid of king Ochofias, that he began to reign about twenty two years of age, and was wicked, an imitator of the idolatry of impious Achab king of Ifrael, which was taught him by his mother Athalia, fifter of that wicked king; and he reign'd but a year, at the end whereof he dy'd in his wickedness.

It is faid of Achaz (4 Kings vi.) that he was twenty years of age when he began to reign; and that he did not apply himself to good, (2 Chron xxviii) and to the service of God, but follow'd the example of the idolatrous kings of Ifrael, and that he far furpass'd them in impiety, wherein he died after he had persever'd in wickedness the space of fixteen years.

Amon (4 Kings xxi.) reign'd at the age of twentytwo, and became an imitator of the vices of his father Manaffes, but not of his repentance, and dy'd in his fins at the end of two years, murthered by his

domesticks. 4 Kings xxiii.

Joachim (2 Chron. xxxvi.) began at the age of tweny-five, and reigned eleven years; during which time he was wicked like his ancestors, and dy'd in his iniquities, without being lamented by any one, and also depriv'd of the honour of a sepulchre, according to the menace of the prophet Jeremy. Jerem. xxii.

His fon Jechonias (4 Kings xxiv.) having succeeded at the age of eighteen, reign'd but three months, at the end whereof he deserv'd for his fins to fall into the hands Nebuchadonosor, and was sent into Babylon;

where he died a long time after. It was no vinb ent

Sedecias, (4 Kings xxiv, & xxv.) the last of the kings of Juda, being come to the crown at the age of twentyone, was also wicked like his predecessors; and having persever'd in his iniquities the space of eleven years, he drew upon himself and his people the utmost effect of the revenge which God had threaten'd the Jewish nation with for a long time : for in the ninth year of his reign the city of Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadonosor king of Babylon, and after two years fiege it was taken, fack'd, and put to fire and fword, the temple ranfack'd and burnt, the temple of God pillaged and fet on fire; those of the people who had escap'd the fury of the fword, or famine, were fent into captivity. And he flying with his children, was taken, and brought before the proud king; who after expressing his fury and indignation, caused his children to be butcher'd before his face, and afterwards pull'd out his eyes, and fent him captive into Babylon, where he died miserably, undergoing the just punishment of his iniquities.

We must add to these examples those which we have recounted in the sixth chapter, since all those of whom we spoke in that place, died in their sins, and in punishment of the sins committed in their youth.

These examples are very common in sacred scripture, the contrary are very rare; and as I have said, we find but one in the Old Testament, who was sincerely converted after he had liv'd wickedly in his youth, viz.

Manasses,

Manasses, and that by so strange a means, that it shews clearer than day, the dreadful difficulty of amending

the wicked inclinations of younger years.

This prince (4 Kings xxi.) having lost his father Exechias, one of the most pious kings of Juda, at the age of twelve years inherited his crown, but not his wirtues: for soon blotting out of his mind the holy examples and wise documents he had received from him, he addicted himself to all forts of vices and impieties, such as the scripture recounts. His iniquities daily encreas'd until the fifteenth, or according to others, till the two and twentieth year of his reign, wherein God punish'd his crime in an exemplary manner. He was taken by the Asyrians in the city of Jerusalem, sent captive into Babylon loaden with irons and chains, cast into a frightful prison, where he was overwhelm'd with misery and affliction.

Being reduc'd to this extremity, he began to open his eyes, and call upon him in his afflictions, whom he had forgotten in his prosperity. He acknowledg'd his iniquities, and sued for pardon with a truly contrite heart, and by the force of tears and prayers obtain'd from God his deliverance: after which he did penance for his fins, and liv'd in holiness all the remainder of his life, even to the age of fixty seven,

when he died.

S. Jerome adds to this history a very remarkable parcular, which he took from the tradition of the Hebrews: for expounding what the scripture says in general terms, (Hieron. in quest. Heb. in Paral.) That Manasses being oppress'd with affliction, had recourse to God, he saith, that it was at the approach of a frightful death, to which he was expos'd. He was doom'd to die in a great brazen vessel, pierc'd with many holes, set upon a hot sire; which heating the vessel, and penetrating it on every side, must consume that miserable prince by its slames; by so much the more cruel, as they were slow in execution. He was shut

p in this vessel, and the fire kindled under him. In his dreadful approach of death, this misfortunate rince did not apply himself to God, but first to the dols which he had ador'd; fo strangely was he blind-d with his former fins. But when he perceiv'd that was in vain to invoke their affiftance, he called to mind a fentence of the facred fcripture which he had often heard from his father in his youth, by which God promises his affistance to those who have recourse to him in their tribulations, and convert themselves to him with all their beart, and with a great forrow for their in the prime or their youth, and that t.vi. Jeni

He presently rais'd his heart to God with fighs and lementations, and beg'd his deliverance with fuch a contrition for his fins, that God shewed him mercy. and not only deliver'd him from that frightful death, but from flavery, and brought him back to Ferufalem, where he spent the rest of his life after the manner I have already describ'd. See here, Theotime, a converfion after a wicked youth, but a conversion purchas'd left corruption (hould taine his mind, an est rash at

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deceived with the falle appearance of the vanity and pleasures of the world, which delude men, and make them love thate tilks waich H 3oft opposite to

Of the great evils which spring from a wicked youth.

HE greatest of evils is that where Tenth mo-I of we speak, viz, the loss of fal- tive which obvation and eternal ruin, which befalls liges young many thro' fins of their youth ; it being people to vircertain, that fins committed in that age tue! are the original cause of damnation to many. But besides that, there are many others issu-ing from the same source, which are necessary to be known, dear Theotime, to the end that knowing them, you may conceive a greater horror of the cause which produces them.

up in this vessel, and the sire kindled under him In this dreadful approach of Tan, A his missortunate

The first evil, viz. death, which the fins of youth basten build and any remain in many he and ad daidy elobi

Put in the first place immature death, which happens to many young persons in punishment of their sins.

I do not mean, that all those who die in the flower of their age, die in punishment of their sins, nor that all those, who follow vice in their youth, are punished

with untimely death mos bus successful rises in wild

I know very well, that the pious sometimes depart in the prime of their youth, and that this death is a recompence of their virtue, and an effect of the love God bears them, according to that of the sacred scripture, in the book of Wisdom (chap. iv.) If the just, says the wise man, be prevented by death, be will find therein repose and salvation; his virtue having rendered him agreeable to God, purchased his love, and obtained for him to be taken out of this world, where he liv'd amongst sinners. God withdrew him betimes, lest corruption should taint his mind, and his soul be deceived with the salse appearance of the vanity and pleasures of the world, which delude men, and make them love those things which are most opposite to their salvation.

I know also very well, that there are many sinners who live a long time, and who grow old in the vices contracted in their youth, like him whom Daniel calls by that name, (Dan. iii.) Inveterate dierum malorum, O thou that are old in a wicked life; and that the hasten'd death of the just, who died in the flower of his age, condemns, as the wise man says, the long life of the wicked: (Wisd. iv.) because the former gains heaven in the small time he liv'd, and the long life of the latter serves only to multiply their crimes, and encrease their damnation.

But I say that it is also most true, that many die young in punishment of their sins, and that the sins

of

that age advance the death of many. The scripture ews this in many places, it alledges a vast number examples, and daily experience puts it beyond dif-

Job speaking of the wicked, says, He shall perish efore the number of his days be accomplished, and shall be like a bunch of grapes, which a blasting wind nips in its flower, or like an olive whose blossom withers;

Tob xxiii. 2, 3.

Solomon in his Proverbs fays, The years of the wicked shall be shortened, and the sinner shall be like a storm which paffeth in a moment. (Prov. x. 25.) In his Ecclesiastes, chap. 7. he admonishes you to have a care not to abandon yourfelf to lin, nor to be of the number of the unwife, that is of finners, lest you should die in a time not design'd for you, that is, sooner than you should have done according to the natural course deplorable and dreadful. We mak lamabil twoy to

And in the eighth chapter he defires, thro' a just indignation, that the wicked should not prosper, nor his days be prolonged; and that all those who have no fear nor respect for the majesty of the all-seeing God, and who are so bold as to offend him before his face, and in his presence, should pass like a shadow which hath no substance, and which perisheth young people, whom the fins of their snamom a ni

All these expressions are clear in scripture, and the examples are there yet more evident. See what we alledged in the precedent chapter, concerning Ochofias, Amon, Joachim, and Sedecias; in the fixth chapter, in the persons of the children of Juda and Heli, and

in that of Amnon and Absolom.

And altho we had no other proofs of this truth, the examples we daily see, discover it too clearly. How many young people do we fee die, some in a burning fever, or other like diftemper; others in a quarrel, or some wicked encounter; others in duels, the destruction of so many souls; others killed in war; 713111

others

others perish by dreadful and unexpected accidents? All these deaths, which are but too frequent, are the effects of the divine wrath against young people, who contemn his favours, and refuse to serve him in an age to which he is particularly entitled. O Theotime, have a dread, lest these punishments should befall you.

ARTICLE U. . E. . mxxd

The second evil which springs from sins committed in youth, blindness of mind, and obdurateness in vice.

Orporal death is not the only, nor the worst effect of the sins of youth; that which they cause in the soul by interior blindness and obdurateness in evil, in which they involve her, are no less common, yet far more deplorable and dreadful. We must lament the dead, says the wise man, because he loseth the light; but we must lament a sinner, because he bath lost his judgment: The sorrow for the dead ought to continue but seven days, that is, a small time, but we must lament a sinner all the space of his life; Eccl. xxii. For how can we consider without tears and sorrow so great and universal a missortune, which we see in many young people, whom the sins of their youth bring to a prodigious obdurateness, which abandons them to vice without restraint? The

Obdurateness multitude of those is innumerable, of youth in vice who after having spent their youth

in the disorders of fin, and principally in those of impurity, become insensible of their salvation, blind to their own interest, obdurate in evil, contemning the most wholsom admonitions, glorying in their iniquities, scoffing at all the good they see perform'd by others, and having no other thought than to take their pleasures, and follow all the motions of their deprav'd appetites, running thus blindly on their

their perdition, so that nothing is able to withhold them. O Theotime, is not this a deplorable evil? But I wish to God it were not so frequent as it is great. S. Augustin had notably experienc'd it in his own perfon, as he himself relates in his confessions; where he deplores his misfortune with words capable of moving the hardest hearts, and which deserve to be here cited at length, to teach young people how they ought to dread the cruel effect of the fins of youth.
That lascivious concupiscence of the flesh, and boiling

of my youthful blood, exhaled fuch clouds into my mind, that they overspread it with dark obscurity, and in such a manner cast a mist over it, that it could not discern the serenity of chaste love from the darkness of impure lust. Both of these raising a turbulent consustomin me, dragg'd my frail youth into the precipice of all sort of concupiscence, and plung'd it into the gulf of wicked-ness; Lib. 2. confess. cap. 2.

And afterwards he adds, that the brutal passion of immodest love was like a chain, which kept him bound, and that the noise of this chain continually rattling, had made him interiorly deaf, and hinder'd him from hearkening to any good advice; like a beast strongly chain'd, the motion of whose chain hindered it from hearing any other noise. And that which is yet very remarkable is, that he adds, this deafness was a punishment of the pride of his foul, wherein he continually banish'd himself from God, who suffer'd him to plunge deeper and deeper in the abyss of vice.

Behold, dear Theotime, whither the fins of youth lead, and whither yours will infallibly bring you, if you

withdraw not yourself intirely, and that in good time.
This subject of blindness and obdurateness in vice, caus'd by the fins of youth, and particularly by the fin of impurity, deferves a longer discourse; but it shall be more amply treated in Part 3. chap. 8. art. 2. to which I refer you.

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their perdition, so that nothing is able to withhold Enem. O The HE, B. L. D. L. T. R. Alorable evil ? But

The third evil, the loss of many fair bopes.

His evil is too visible, and there needs no other I proof than daily experience. How many youths do we see, who give fair hopes by the excellent qualities wherewith they are endowed, who might make themselves capable of some great action, and one day succeed in some considerable employment, where God might be honour'd, and the publick well ferv'd: How many, I fay, do we see perishing at their first fetting out, and by the errors of their youth difqualify themselves for the great atchievements for which they were defign'd? How many, with these great dispositions, buried in sloth and idleness the rest of their lives? like trees covered with bloffoms in the fpring, which a nipping frost strips, and renders un-

fruitful all the rest of the year.

This happens not only to those in whom the fins of youth either hasten death, or bring an obdurateness in vice, as we have said, but also very frequently to those who are withdrawn from fin after the first diforders of youth, who having loft by idleness (the constant companion of vice) the most precious time of all their life, are made uncapable of any thing, and unufeful in all that is good. Or if they have not abfolutely lost that time, they are become by their reiterated and multiply'd fins unworthy of the employments they were capable of, and for which God had defign'd and whither yours will infallably bring you, ment

Comprehend this well, Theotime, and that you may understand it better, take notice of this truth which you ought never to forget; that God by his providence defigns young people for different states, where-in he would employ them for his service and their falvation. But there are two conditions requir'd, the MAR

furing their youth; the other, not to render themfelves undeferving by their fins. From whence it follows, that if young persons fail in either of these conditions, that is, if they neglect to qualify themselves for what God designs, or, while they are so employ'd, abandon themselves to vice, they never arrive at the stations for which they were at first intended; or if thro' presumption they rashly engage in them, they are entangled in employments above their capacity, the duties of which they never can discharge, and consequently are expos'd to almost inevitable perdition.

This truth is grounded upon facred scripture. When God promis'd to David the kingdom of Israel for himself and his posterity, it was upon this condition, (2 Chron. vi. and iii. 3.) that he and his offspring should live in the observance of his commandments. Ps. cxxxi.

A little while before, he had taken away the honour of priesthood from the family of the high priest Heli, because he and his children were become unworthy by their sins. Althor in his first intention the priesthood was always to remain in that family, but with this condition, that they should not render themselves unworthy: the words are very clear in the first book of Kings, chap. ii.

This procedure appears most evident in the case of Saul first king of Israel. God had given that kingdom to him, and his family, but upon condition, that he should keep his commandments. It happen'd that this prince transgress'd the orders of God in two remarkable occasions in consequence whereof he was rejected from the kingdom which God had prepar'd

for him. Thou to and and word gright

The first was, being one day in his camp, pres'd by his enemies to engage in a battle, he offer'd sacrifice without waiting the arrival of the prophet Samuel, who had forbid him to attempt any thing till his return. The sacrifice was scarce ended, when the prophet

came

came and faid to him, What have you done? you have done foolifbly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God which he gave you. Had you not committed this fault, the Lord had established your kingdom upon Israel for ever: but now your kingdom shall not

for what God defign . or. whilinix again it equations

The fecond occasion was, when having overcome the Amalecites, he spar'd the life of their king, and preserv'd their flocks and all their riches, against the command God had given him not to spare any thing, but to consume all with fire and sword. Samuel reproach'd him for his disobedience, and declar'd to him from God, that he should be no more king of Israel. Because, says he, you have rejected the word of God, he hath also rejected you, so that you shall be no more king. I Kings xv.

Learn from these examples, Theo-An important time, that God sometimes designs men advice: for employments which their sins prevent their attaining, or continuing a

long time in them if obtained. And be assured, that if you live wickedly in your youth, you have great reason to fear that God will reject you from that condition to which he had design'd you, and that you shall never atchieve any thing considerable; God refusing you the honour of employing you when you are at a sit age, as you have neglected to serve him in your youth, and make yourself worthy of your youaron, and deserving the assistance of his grace.

remailenble occ.VIn B LO I T. A whereof he was

The fourth evil springing from the fins of youth, the ex-

THIS evil will feem to you at present incredible, but you will understand it clearly upon the least reflection.

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For first, if it be true, as we have shewn, that the vices of youth cannot be overcome without the greatest difficulty, it follows, that a great part of the corruption we see amongst men springs from that which they had contracted in their younger years.

Besides, it is certain, that bad children become wicked fathers, and wicked fathers make their children vicious: as they have liv'd in disorder during their youth, without taking any care to amend, they concern themselves but little that their children should be educated in the sear of God; and thus corruption is communicated, and passes from father to son by a continual succession.

Now if this proposition be verified in the greatest part of young persons, it is found more evidently in those who apply to study, of whom it is true to say, that their wicked life causes the greatest part of the sins and disorders of the world; because they are the men that attain to dignities, whether ecclesiastical or secular, wherein they behave themselves according to the inclinations and habits they learn'd in their youth, and according to the first impressions they receiv'd. Now when such behave ill in these stations, the evil is not confin'd to their persons, but extends to all those they ought to govern, instruct, or edify; who lose all those advantages, and instead of receiving from them examples of virtue, gather nothing but the imitation of their vices, and the corruption of their manners.

In a word, I say, Theotime, that vicious students become in the church wicked priests, ignorant, unprofitable to God and his church, and frequently scandalous, idle, covetous, worldly and debaucht incumbents; pastors incapable of their charge, who acquit themselves very ill, to the great detriment of souls. In the world, gentlemen that are proud, quarrelsome, duellists, immodest, blasphemous, libertines. In the courts of justice, wicked judges, corrupted, acceptors of persons, and who commit many injustices

for money, favour, or fear, thro the ignorance or rashness with which they give sentence; lawyers that are wranglers, impostors, and cheaters. In the civil state, magistrates incapable of their charges, little careful of their duty, who see vice and hinder it not, thro a criminal neglect, which, in the fight of God, makes them sharers in the guilt of those crimes they do not prevent. And from the corruption of these four forts of persons springs the iniquity of the people, and the overflowing of vice in the world. Thus it may be truly faid, that the wickedness of students is the first source of the greatest part of the vices and diforders of the world.

Confider attentively, O dear Theotime, these four evils one after another, and learn by their greatness of how much importance it is for you to addict your

and disorders of the world; because they are the men that ditain to dighties, whether acciefultical or fear-

felf to virtue in your youth. hard the heads we red tade

lar, wherein they iVIX . A. A. H. O coording to the

That the devil uses all his endeavours to lead young Evisor with enougeople into vice. or subtons has

I've and I'N fine, Theotime, that I may make Eleventh mo- you comprehend of how much tive for ferv- importance it is for you to devote ing God in yourself to God in your youth; it revil, that fworn enemy of man's falval

tion, fearing nothing more than to fee you virtuous in your youth, employs all his endeavours to gain you to him, and all those of your age, that he may de-

ftroy you past recovery.

This truth is a very manifest conse-The attempts quence from all that we have faid beof the devil to fore. That curfed fiend, who studies destroy young nothing but to rob God as much as people. he can, of the honour due to him, and men of the happinels prepar'd for

them,

hem, knows very well, that to lead youth to vice is he means of taking from God the first and greatest cknowledgment which men owe him. He knows n the fecond place, how injurious to God a wicked ife of youth is, as we have manifested above : he snows how dreadful must be the consequence, the leep engagement in fin, the hardness of heart, and mpatience of mind : and moreover, he understands very well, that there is no other more certain way to fill the earth with iniquities, and to damn mankind. This is the reason why he employs all his industry to orrupt the innocence of youth, as the first source of alvation, and of all the bleffings of the world, He knows well, that to poison the waters of a fountain, it s fufficient to cast venom into the spring, which communicates it eafily to all the brooks: and that to conquer a realm, the best method is to secure the frontier places, which give enterance into all the rest of the

This curfed fiend understands well how to put in practice the mischief he taught Pharaob, to whom he fuggested the destruction of all the male infants of the Ifraelites, that so he might exterminate the people of

virtuous

God.

He exerciseth daily both the malice and the cruelty of Nabuchodonosor, who having taking king Sedecias with his children, at the facking of Jerusalem, caused the children's throats to be cut before the father's face, and fatisfied himfelf with putting out the father's eyes, and spared his life. Thus this cruel enemy employs all his malice to murder the children by fin, and strives to blind interiorly the fathers, that they may not see, or not be sensible of the loss of their children, nor deliver them from the danger in which

The same king returning into his country, proud and elated with his victories, carried, as the fairest part of his triumph, the young people of the city of Feru-

Salem

Salem prisoners before him, as is related by the prophet Fereny, Lam. i. And he left nothing in that defolate city more to be lamented, than the deplorable loss of the young people, which the same pro-

Thus, dear Theotime, this deteltable fiend, who, as the scripture says, is establish'd king over all the proud, hath no greater reason insolently to triumph over the holy church, than by the multitude of young people which he keeps in flavery by fin. And this pious mother accounts no loss more deplorable than that of her dear children, which the enemy fnatches from her in their younger years, some by one vice, others by another, but most by the fins of impurity, which is the strongest chain by which he holds them in captivity; exercifing thus continually the rage he hath conceived against her from her nativity, and the immortal war he hath fworn to wage against all her children, according to the revelation made to St. John in the Apocalyps, chap. xii.

Lastly, This war of the enemy of mankind against young people is a thing fo manifest, that the same St. John writing to the faithful, and congratulating every age for the bleffings most peculiar to them, expresses a particular congratulation to young people for the victory they have gain'd over the enemy, as being those who are most persecuted. I write to you young men, fays he, because you have conquer'd the malignant spirit; I write to you young people, because you are valiant, and the word of God bath remain'd with you,

and you have overcome the enemy. I John ii.

O dear Theotime, happy are all those young people to whom with truth we may fay, that they have conquer'd the enemy of their falvation. I represent unto you here the war he wages against those of your age, that we may congratulate you in that manner; and that by the persecution he raises against you, you may know first how necessary it is that you should be falem. virtuous

rituous in your youth, fince the devil endeavours fo. powerfully to corrupt you. Secondly, with how much courage you ought to refift the attempts of that cruel enemy, who feeks your destruction with fo. much fury. How is it possible you should no tstand in horror of that enemy of your salvation? and that you should not dread, more than death, to let yourself be overcome by that deteftable enemy, who feeks all ways to destroy you for ever the second garado Jao hath an incredible aversion for 5. hy radon

6. Because your eternal squadior hash a great dependance upon the life you lead in your youth as that

If and it you follow vice, you cannot withdraw

T is time to put an end to this first Read attenpart; and, in recapitulating all that tively this we have faid, to represent to you in chapter. fhort, the great obligations you have to confecrate yourself to virtue in your youth.

It is certainly then, Theotime, of great consequence that you should be virtuous in your younger years, and that the good or evil life of youth is not child's play, nor a thing that deferves little care or regard, as the greatest part of the world thinks; but that it is a business of great importance, the truth of which is founded upon all that is great and facred in what concerns the fervice of God, and falvation of men.

1. You are obliged to serve God in your youth, because you ought to acknowledge him as as your creator and fovereign mafter, for the being you have received from him, and by reason of the most subyou, having made you for nothing less than to possels him eternally in heaven, after you have faithfully ferv'd him upon earth. Stone sail for how (view dot) Adan set is two By

2. By reason of the vast favours he has shewn you, by calling you to Christianity and the Catholick re-

ligion, out of which there is no lalvation gravos doum

3. Because the service of young people is singularly pleasing to God, since he loves them with a particular affection, and is pleas'd to confer many benefits upon them.

4. Because you cannot refuse him your service, with-

out offering him a very heinous injury find of avaw ile

5. By reason he hath an incredible aversion for

wieked young people.

6. Because your eternal salvation hath a great dependance upon the life you lead in your youth : fo that if you let your affection upon virtue in your younger years, you will eafily preserve it the remainder of your life; and if you follow vice, you cannot withdraw yourself but with very great difficulty, and perhaps

7. To avoid the heavy misfortunes which spring from the wicked life of youth; untimely death, obdurateness in sin, the loss of many fair hopes, and the

overflowing of vice amongst men.

8. And lastly, because of the persecution which the devil railes against young people, whom he continually endeavours to withdraw from the service of God, and enfnare betimes in diforders, that he may destroy

them without recovery. Sanstronen 10019 to Blambud

After all these reasons, I ask of you, Theotime, whether now you hefitate at what you have to do? Are not these confiderations powerful enough to convince you of the obligation you have to confecrate yourfelf to virtue in your youth? And if you be convinc'd thereof, what do you mean? What is your defign and resolution for the future? Perhaps hitherto you have not comprehended the greatness of this obligation, but now understanding it clearly, what judgment ought you not to expect from God, if you be rebellious to the light, (Job xxiv.) and act like those wretches

retches in the scripture, who say to God, Depart rom us, we will not receive the knowledge of thy ways?

The sacred scripture recounts, that the Jews being

eturn'd from the captivity of Babylon, the prophet into them, from whence they had received no in-

That people had scarce begun to hear the law, when they wept bitterly, and made the air resound with their cries and lamentations: fo that the priefts and levites who read the law, were more employed fruct them. This poor people miserably deplored their missortune of being ignorant of their duty and obligation to the fervice of God, and of being fo far removed as not to come to the knowledge thereof.

O dear Theorime, I beleech the divine Goodness by his grace to work the same effect in your heart. After reading the truths I have represented to you, is it possible that you should not be touch'd with the force of truth, and the care of your own falvation? And that after reading all these reasons, which shew the strict obligations you have to the service of your creator, you should that the book without making any reflection upon yourself, or taking proper resolutions for the future? I conjure you by the honour and respect you owe to God; by the love you owe to his son Jesus Christ your gracious saviour; by the concern you ought to have for your eternal salvation: I con-jure you, I say, that you do not read these truths unprofitably, and that when you have read them, you do not cast the book out of your hands, until you have made a full resolution to think seriously on your falvation: and in order to it, firmly to refolve to lead a virtuous life during youth, preserving the grace you have receiv'd, or correcting your past life by a holy and virtuous one, if it hath been disorderly.

It is here, dear child, where you must open your

eyes to see yourself, and deplore your past offences

and the blindness which hath produced them, saying with S. Augustin, Wo, we be to the darkness wherein I have lain! we be to the blindness which bath hindered me from seeing the light of heaven! we to my past ignorance, wherein I knew not thee! I give thee thanks O God, whom I acknowledge to be my illuminator and redeemer, because thou hast enlighten'd me with thy grace, so that now I know thee. I have known thee too late, O late, O ancient truth; I have known thee too late, O

eternal verity. Solil. cap. 33. mul bas esto went ditive

Here it is that you must hearken to the voice of your eternal father, who calls you to him. To day, fays the prophet, if you bear his voice, barden not your bearts. You must return to him with much confufion, for having fo much abus'd his goodness, and behav'd yourself like an ungracious child towards so tender a father; deploring from the bottom of your heart your ingratitude and infidelity, with those excellent expressions of S. Bernard; God by his bounty bath been pleas'd to shew bimself a father towards me, but I have not carry'd myself like a son towards bim; with what face can I raise my eyes towards beaven, to so good a father, having been so undutiful a child! I blush to have committed actions unworthy of my extraction. I am confounded at my past life, because I have so much degenerated from so good and boly a father. Weep, mine eyes, and turn yourselves into a fountain of tears, and let confusion oversbade my countenance. S. Ber. ferm. 16. in Cant. Thoy not syad of the us now

O happy tears! dear Theotime, bleffed confusion! which coming from God, and thro' God, hath wrought in you a holy penance, and will put you into the path of eternal salvation, and happily conduct you in the ways of virtue, which I shall immediately lay before you by the affistance of his divine grace. Let

me entreat your ferious intention. Lyipper synd not

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Wherein H. H. Tous confift so

Instruction of Youth

differmity of folid piety from

CHRISTIAN PIETY.

tent it to themfelves, every one forming it account to his own inclination In A.A. think themle

Of the necessary means for acquiring victue during youth.

WHEN the holy man Toby had order'd his for to go to the city of Rages; to his friend Gabelus, he commanded him at the same time to seek the means for performing that voyage, and endeavour to find a guide to conduct him thither securely. The good child complying with his duty to the orders of his father, meets; by a special providence of God, the angel Raphael in the habit of a traveller, who promis'd to conduct him in his journey, and bring him back in safety, all which he perform'd exactly.

Thus, dear Theotime, having shew'd you the indispensable obligations you have to enter the way of virtue in your youth, I tell you now, that you ought to learn and know perfectly the means for well performing so important a journey.

I shall lay them before you in this second part; and if you carefully enquire after them, God will send his angels to conduct you in the way, and affift you with his grace to arrive happily at the end.

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CHAPI

Wherein true virtue confifts.

First means, the know edge of true virtue.

HE first means to acquire virtue is the knowledge of it, and the discerning of folid piety from that which is false and imaginary.

Many forts of false virtue.

Many feem to love virtue, who are far from it, because they love not virtue as it is in itself, but as they repre-

fent it to themselves, every one forming it according to his own inclination: for some think themselves virtuous, when they are not of the number of the wicked. Others place virtue in abstaining from certain vices, for which they have a kind of aversion, tho' fubject to others no less criminal in the fight of God. Others esteem themselves virtuous when they are addicted to some actions of exterior piety, altho' on the other fide they wholly neglect the interior regulation of their conscience, commonly defil'd with mortal fins. And all these are so much more to be lamented, as they imagine themselves to be in a good way, when they are absolutely out of it; and thinking to arrive by that course at the port of falvation, they find themselves at length in the direct way to perdition, verifying in that respect that saying of Solomon, There is a way which to a man feems straight, and the end of it leads to death.

Virtue, Theotime, doth not depend on the opinion of men, it is the work of God; from him then must we learn its rule, fince he alone can direct in what manner he will be ferv'd.

True virtue fear of God.

Hearken then to what he fays of it in the facred scripture, and he will confifts in the teach you how wisdom, that is, virtue, confists in fearing God, and flying abso-

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lutely from fin, and that he hath thus instructed man in his creation. Then, faith Job, that is, in the beginning of the world, God faid to man, the fear of God is true wisdom, and perfett understanding consists in departing from fin; Job xxviii.

He teacheth the fame thing by the royal prophet, by whom he gives you this general rule of virtue,

Fly evil, and do good. Pfal. xxxvi.

Wife Solomon informs you of the fame truth; Fear God, says he, and observe bis commandments, for in that is all man; (Eccl. xii.) in that confifts the perfection of man, for that he was born, that is his last end and real happiness. Towniv to a happiness and

In fine, the facred scripture acknowledges no other wisdom or piety than the fear of God, which it calls the beginning, the plenitude, the crown of wisdom.

Prov. xi. Eccl. i. ibid. a dixil all all chand born

Taving

Now this fear is not that which is purely fervile, apprehending more the punishment than the detestation of fin; but it is a loving fear of the children of God, which makes them hate fin because it displeaseth God, and love good because it is agreeable to him. Like the fear and respect a good child bears his father, which makes him fearful to offend, and feek diligently all means of pleafing him in his actions.

So that, Theotime, according to the maxims of the divine school, true virtue consists in the fear of God, which effects a voluntary observation of the commandments, and causes a fear and detestation of offending God above all things, and feeks the means to pleafe him and retain his favour. This alone ought to be accounted virtue, and that which is not directed by this certain and infallible rule is to be deem'd false piety.

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in his creation. The Hair AbHhy is, in the begin-

inng of the world, God faild to man, the fear of God is That to acquire virtue we must define it. parting from fin; Job xxviii.

and do to HE knowledge of a thing is Second means, I not fufficient to acquire it, we the defire of must love and ardently defire it. Love wildem, is the first mover of our actions; love animates enterprizes, and gives

them fuccefs. If this be certain in all other things we undertake, it is yet more infallible in virtue; because the love and defire of virtue is one part of virtue itself, and a very powerful means to attain it. add and all

It is the means the wife man gives you, dear Theotime, and which he himself made use of with very good fuccefs. In the fixth chapter of the book of Wisdom, he faith, That Wisdom is a thing which cannot be hidden, nor be subject to corruption; she is quickly perceived by those who love ber, she prevents those who defire her, and goes before to manifest herself to them. But hear how he himself made use of these means in his youth, and learn to conform yourfelf to that perfect originals which the salam dordw a

He faith in the feventh chapter, that having confider'd the common mifery of men, who are all born in weakness and ignorance, he began earnestly to defire this wisdom, and to be freed from these afflictions. For this reason, says he, I wish'd and receiv'd understanding and prudence; I demanded by my prayers the spirit of wildom, and it was bestow'd upon me; I made more account of her than of kingdoms and thrones: riches I efteem'd as nothing in comparison of her, neither did I compare precious stones to ber; for all gold is but a little gravel in respect of her, and all silver shall be accounted but clay before her; and all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches thro' ber bands. Wifd. vii.

Having afterwards described the beauty and wonders of wisdom, he adds in the eighth chapter, I have lov'd, says he, this divine wisdom from my youth, and sought her; I desir'd to have her for my spouse, such love had I for her beauty; and renouncing the affection to all mortal and perishable creatures, I have propos'd to take her into my company, knowing she would counsel me good things, and comfort me in cares and grief. Wisd. viii.

O what an excellent example, Theotime, is this, to make you understand how necessary the desire of virtue is, and how effectual in obtaining it! Learn then by this pattern to set your affection on virtue, and ardently to desire it. Persuade yourself, as it is most certain, that there is nothing besides it that is desirable in the world, nothing that can worthily satisfy your love but it alone, or can render you happy and contented; and that without it you will always be miferable both in this life and the next.

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Of prayer, the third means of acquiring virtue.

OF all the means for attaining virtue this is the most important. It is not sufficient to desire it, prayer. we must search for it with all diligence; and that we may successfully seek it, we must go to the fountain-head, and demand it of him who is the author of it, and bestows it on those who beg it as they ought, according to that expression of the scripture, If any one wants wisdom, let him demand it of God, who gives it abundantly to all. Jam. i.

This is the means which wife Solomon employ'd, together with that ardent defire of wisdom, whereof we have now spoke. For in the same place he faith,

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(Wisd.

(Wisd. viii.) that after he had consider'd all the perfection of wisdom, he conceiv'd such an ardent love for her, that he search'd on all sides to find her; and that in savour of the innocence of his tender age, during which time he had preserv'd both soul and body exempt from the corruptions of youth, God gave him to understand that wisdom is the effect of his grace, and that he could not acquire it unless God gave it him; and that he had no sooner understood this truth, but he address'd himself to that author of all wisdom; and that he requested it of him with all the strength of his heart. The prayer he employ'd we shall set down at the end of this chapter.

Besides this excellent example, the scripture also furnisheth you with that of the wise author of Ecclesiasticus, who recounts thus the means he made use of in his youth to acquire virtue. When I was yet young, and in the first innocence of my age I sought wisdom, demanding her of God by my prayers; I have ask'd for her early, and I will search for her even to the end of my life; I have departed from vice to seek her from my youth; I have listed up my hands towards heaven, and my soul hath acknowledged her ignorance, hath sighed after the wisdom which God communicates to men, and he hath vouchsafed to illuminate my darkness, and bestow upon me that so much to be wish'd for

This is the way these great men took to acquire wisdom in their early years. The scripture proposes them to all young people as the model they ought to imitate to attain it, and I would to God they were

imitated by many.

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But for you, Theotime, who by the grace of God aspire to that wisdom, it behoveth you to imitate them, and follow the way they have shewn. Beg daily of God, with all the ardor of your affection, this wisdom, which removes ignorance, banisheth sin, and leads by the path of virtue to real felicity; offer-

ing

ng to him from the bottom of your heart that excel-

ent prayer of Solomon.

O God of mercy, who hast created all things with thy word; I most bumbly beseech thee that thou wouldst bestow upon me some ray of thy divine wisdom which accompanies thee in heaven. Cast me not out of the number of thy children. Vouchsafe to acknowledge that I am thy servant and thy creature, a man weak and mor-tal, and uncapable of comprehending by myself thy boly precepts. Send me from heaven, and from thy feat of majesty, thy divine wisdom, that she may be with me, and labour with me; and that by ber holy inspirations I may know thy will to fulfil it; and that she may conduct me in all my actions according to the rule of thy commandments, and preserve me by her power, that I may have the happiness to please thee in all the actions of my life. Wisd. ix.

With this prayer, or some such like it, if you say it as you ought, you will obtain all that you shall demand: but remember that it must have these three

conditions that it may be efficacious; it must be humble, fervent, and perfeverant. Humble, acknowledging ons of prayer. that you cannot obtain wisdom or vir-

tue but from God alone. Fervent, to demand it with a most fervent desire. Perseverant, to beg her daily, as there is no day wherein the divine grace is not necessary to preserve or encrease it.

CHAP. VI.

That they must love and seek after instruction.

PEfides the means of prayer, in- Fourth means, D struction is also necessary for ob- instruction. taining virtue. Tho' none but God can give wisdom, yet ordinarily he doth not be-flow it but by the ministry of men, by whom he is pleas'd we should be conducted in the path of virtue, inspiring by his grace our hearts with his holy truths, at the same time that men teach us on their parts by their words. For this reason hath he esta-hlish'd in his church pastors and doctors, as the apoftle faith, to teach men divine truths, and conduct them in the way of falvation. Now if instruction be necessary for all men, it is

particularly for young persons, who by reason of their age have little knowledge of the maxims of wisdom, and are incapable of discovering them without affistance.

It is not then sufficient, dear Theotime, to beg daily wisdom and virtue from Almighty God, you must defire and seek after instruction and direction in the way to it, from them who know it.

This defire of instruction is so necessary for obtaining virtue, that it is the beginning thereof, according to that of the wife man; The beginning, faith he, of

wisdom is a real desire of instruction. Wisd. vi.

And lastly, that you may be fully convincid, read attentively this excellent exhortation which he makes concerning it, in chap. vi. of Ecclesiasticus: Son, says he, if you attentively bearken to them who can direct you, you will learn; if you bring thither a trastable spirit, you will become wife; if you shall readily give ear to good instructions, you will receive knowledge, and if you love to bear others, you will attain wisdom. Wherefore take care to converse with wife men, desire their company, and discreet discourses; that you may understand them when they speak of God, and not be deprived of those excellent truths you ought to learn from their mouths.

Now there are many ways by which we may receive instructions for virtue, as preaching, books of piety, of which we shall speak hereafter. But that which is most necessary for you at your age, is the particular direction of a wife and virtuous person, who may teach you the true way of salvation. For

this

his reason the wise man adds to the former words; you know an understanding man, be diligent to seek is direction, and frequently visit bim. fell not, or tailing you if you be fallen. By the

of virue, but elec V li. A H D to bave, clearly

of the necessity of a guide in the way of virtue, and particularly during youth. ret he is i

HIS means, Theotime, is the most important of all those which conduct us to virtue; it is the guide who makes all the others fucceed, and without whom it is almost impossible you fhould employ them with fuccess.

Fifth means, the conduct of. a guide.

The way to alvation and real wisdom is a road unknown to you, you have need of a guide to direct you. This is a certain maxim of the facred scripture and holy fathers.

If one blind man lead another, fays the fon of God, they will both fall into the ditch; Matt. xv. How much more if one blind man lead himself in a way he knows not? Wo be to him that goeth alone, fays olomon, because if he fall he bath no one to help him ; Eccl. iv. For this reason in the Proverbs he often admonishes young persons Not to trust to their own conduct: for be is unwise, who relies upon his own judgment, Prov. v. It is is the property of fools to believe themselves, and the wife man bearkens to counsel; Prov. xxviil. ibid. ii. Good Toby instructing his son, gave him this advice among others; Seek always counsel from a wife man ; Tob. iv. Ecclefiasticus hath already said above, that when you fee a prudent and understanding man, you must listen to his instructions, and be frequently with him. But above all, take the counsel he gives you in chap. xxxvii.

Converse, says he, constantly with a pious man, whom you know to have the fear of God, whose mind hath a sympathy

with yours, Eccl. xxxvii. that is, who mutually love one another, and who will compassionate your misfortune, if you chance to stumble in the dark; watching that you fall not, or raising you if you be fallen. By this you see not only the necessity of a guide in the way of virtue, but the qualities he ought to have, clearly express'd; viz. That he must be a virtuous man; that he ardently defire the salvation of him whom he directs, and be able to support him whenever he is in danger of falling, and by confequence, that he have prudence and knowledge requifite for that design.
St. Jerome following these maxims of sacred scripture,

gives the same counsel to a young man desirous to advance in virtue. My advice, says he, is, that you converse with men of piety. Be not your own master, nor enter a way unknown to you without a guide, lest you should mistake your road, and perish in your wandering; or going faster or slower than need requires, you be tir'd with your haste, and so return, or fall fast asleep in your journey; S. Hieron. ep. ad Russinum. This is then, dear Theotime, a very important admonition, which after St. Jerome and even the Holy Ghoft I give you

here.

Make choice of a discreet and virtuous confessor, to whom commit the conduct of your conscience, that you may know of him how you must serve God in your youth. Let him direct you in the path of virtue, teach you the true maxims of piety, and discover to you what you ought to perform, and those you must avoid; reduce you into the right way when you have left it; raise you when you shall fall; advertise you of the dangers you are likely to run into; teach you how to refist temptations, and cure your ill habits; encourage you in virtue; awake you when you are fleepy in the way, and withhold you from running too fast, lest you should fall from your first zeal and fervor into remissiness, and from remissiness into vice, which easily happens to young people.

Consider well these several benefits you will receive from a proper director, and you will have need of him for all these things

For this effect declare unto him from Practice.

know clearly your state, conceal nothing of your interior inclination. Have a great respect for him, as for a man by whom God speaks and directs you; put a considence in his conduct and counsels, hearken attentively to his admonitions, be exact in putting in practice his advice, give him an account of the use you have made of it; be not asham'd to discover unto him all your sins; and chiefly

have a care of falling into the fault of Aremarkable many, who having committed a grea- advice.

ter fin than usually, go to confess

themselves to another, out of a foolish shame they have to declare their sins to their ordinary confessor. To do this, is to render the conduct of a ghostly father entirely unprofitable, and to take the way to fall into many sins, and at the end to be utterly lost. No, no, Theotime, you must bear towards your confessor the considence of a child towards his father, of a sick person towards his physician, to discover all that is within you equally both good and bad.

The physician, if he is not inform'd of a disease, cannot cure it; and the patient who dissembles, exposes himself to great danger, even death itself. Never hide any thing therefore from your director, nor be asraid of making a full discovery of all that has happen'd. If you sincerely repent, you will have no difficulty of confessing your sins to him, who, by knowing your conscience, is best able to prescribe a remedy suitable to your disposition. Remember, dear Theo-

time, this advice, and be fure not to neglect it.

But to find this fo necessary a director, you must demand him of God: beg of him from the bottom of your heart that you may meet with a good one, and without question he will comply with your request. Ask also the counsel of some prudent and virtuous perfon. And when you have found him, change him not easily without necessity; and if he chance to fail you either by death, change of dwelling, or otherwise, make choice readily of another, I more with more

O Theotime, how happy would you be, if you liv'd thus under a good director I you would walk with affurance in the path of falvation, and would advance very much therein; whereas going without a guide, you will always be in danger of straggling out of the ed in the cases over nov

way and being loft.

Call to mind one remarkable thing, which the feripture recounts of king Joas, (4 Kings xii, 2 Chron. xxiv.)

Aconsiderable high priest Joiada in the fear of God, example. instructed in his law, and directed in the way of virtue from the age of fe-

ven years till after forty; during all this time he liv'd holily, and the scripture attributes the cause to the conduct of that pious man. Joas, fays the scripture, (4 Kings xii.) carry'd bimself virtuously all the time that be was instructed by Joiada the bigh priest. But he did not continue in that state: for Joiada being dead, that misfortunate prince, no longer restrain'd by the good documents and prudent counsels of his religious master, gave himself over to licentiousnes, and to the disorders of a wicked life; by which he drew upon himself many disasters, and a miserable death, which God fent him prefently after. This example will teach you what value you ought to fet on a good mafter in the way of virtue.

Many of Cad: 30 mid born of void head that said too to

Let the report of your felt, by bringing your part

Of confession, and first of a general confession.

Penance being a facrament instituted by fesus Christ to blot out the a general confins of Christians, and to restore them fession.
to the grace of God, there is no ques-

tion but it is a very profitable means, and necessary to acquire virtue and sanctity, which ought to begin by the cleansing one's felf from vice.

For this reason I here propose it as the first step to be taken in the design you have form'd of giving yourself to God.

Now to the end this means may prove profitable to you, I advise you to begin with a general confession of all your life; and this for three reasons.

First, because it frequently happens, that the precedent confessions were invalid: as when one has conceal'd therein any mortal sin, too often the case of young people; or when one confesses with too little preparation, without forrow for his sins, and without resolution of amendment. In these cases a general confession is necessary.

Secondly, because althorone see not an evident invalidity in the former confessions, yet nevertheless there is reason to have some doubt, because of so many defects with which they ordinarily abound throrothe negligence of penitents, who confess themselves with very little preparation, almost without any sorrow, and without any amendment. The general confession supplies these defects, and when it is well performed, secures the conscience.

Thirdly, if it be not at all necessary, it will be always very profitable; for three great benefits you will receive thereby: the one is in respect of yourself, the

other on your confessor's side, and the third in regard of God.

First, in respect of yourself; by bringing your past life before your eyes, it makes you know how far you are remov'd from the way of your falvation; humbling you before God in the acknowledgment of your mifery, it will make you take notice of your deprav'd inclinations to correct them, conceive a defire of amendment, and dedicate yourfelf entirely to Almighty God.

Secondly, on your confessor's fide; It serves to give him a pefect knowledge of your conscience, that he may better direct you, and give you advice accord-

ing to your necessity.

Thirdly, in regard of God, it will avail to merit from him more abundant favours on account of your perfect conversion, which he will communicate to you by fo much more as he shall see you humbled before him, and penitent for your offences. A contrite and bumble beart God will not despise; Pf. 50. To perform well this confession.

general confesaim, be the amendment of your life, fron. and withdrawing yourfelf from fin, to

put yourself absolutely in the way of virtue.

Secondly, prepare yourfelf feven or Preparation, eight days before; and during that time, employ yourself in two things.

1. Call to mind your sins. 2. Conceive a great forrow,

and a firm resolution to change your life.

To accomplish the first, employ some time every day to examine yourself, following the order of the commandments of God and of the church, and upon the seven capital fins. For the greater facility, make use of some book of confession, and write down every day what you shall take notice of.

But

But let your labour be chiefly about Contrition. the fecond part, viz. contrition, which darious has is the most necessary and most difficult, and that for which one is ordinarily least prepar'd. Second means Here we must employ 1. Prayer to to obtain conobtain it of God. 2. The reading of trition things which may cause a horror for trition.

fin, and a defire to ferve God. But this must be a fervent prayer, and a ferious and attentive reading.

Withdraw yourself once or twice a day into a private place, and there prostrate yourself before God, befeeching him humbly and ardently that he would touch your heart, and bestow upon you grace to apprehend perfectly the grievoulness of sin, and the injury it offers to his infinite goodness, and a true contrition for them, absolutely departing from them by a ferious repentance, and a perfect change of your life.

Afterwards apply yourfelf to the reading of some book which may discover to you the horror of sin, and the importance of retiring from it. You will find many; I advise you chiefly to make use of Granado's Memorial in the first part, where he hath an excellent preparation for a general confession: read that, or fome other which you have, with much attention, taking every time one or two chapters only, which you shall read often, and meditate attentively upon them, endeavouring to stir up by what you read, a hatred for fin, a horror for having committed it, deploring your mifery, and demanding of God pardon for your offences, and grace to free yourself from them.

The day of your confession being come, after having begg'd of God the grace to perform well this action of so great importance, approach the sacrament with a profound respect, with a great recollection of mind, and with much forrow of heart for having offended God. Accuse yourself of your fins humbly and plainly: after your accufation, protest to your confes-

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confessor; that you detest them with all your heart. and principally by reason of the infinite goodness of God, whom you have heinously offended; that you humbly beg pardon, and are refolv'd to die rather than offend him any more; entreating him that he will instruct you in the necessary remedies against fin, that you may fall no more, and the means from thenceforward to live in virtue and the fear of God. This being done, hearken attentively to what he shall fay, not thinking of any thing elfe. And when you shall be upon the point of receiving absolution, recollect your spirit within you, and humbling yourfelf profoundly before God, renew all the forrow you had for your fins, and implore his mercy, that he would absolve you in heaven at the same time that the priest absolves you by his authority upon earth.

O bleffed day, Theotime, wherein you are freed from the state of sin, and power of the devil, to be admitted into the number of the children of God, and for

ever to ferve him faithfully! A to spanning and bank

But have a care to make this confession profitable, and not to forget it presently, as it happens to many, who afterwards scarce ever think of it, and so return to their former life. To prevent this, execute punctually what your director hath ordain'd, as well in regard of doing penance for past sins, as in avoiding sin for the time to come. Have a care to renew every morning the sorrow for having offended God, and the resolution you have made not to displease him any more upon any account whatsoever.

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Thesday of vour confession being

Of ordinary confession.

THAT confession is not only a very profitable means, but absolutely necessary to keep men in the path of virtue, is a truth made manifest by experience.

ience, which discovers that those who do not frequently practice this divine remedy, relapse soon into their first distempers, by falling into the sins they had forsaken. So that, Theotime, you must hold it for an undoubted maxim, that if you have a real defign to live in virtue, you must frequently approach the sacrament of penance; if not, you will never be difen-gag'd from vice, nor from the way of perdition; which I shall clearly demonstrate by the following

First, because altho' you may be some First reason.

time without falling into mortal fin, nevertheless without frequent confession you cannot avoid a great number of other fins, which being multiply'd and neglected lead to mortal fin.

2. Without frequent confession you Second reason.

may be fecretly engag'd in wicked ha-

bits, which you will not believe to be fuch, and will be exposed to many dangerous occasions, from which you cannot guard yourself unless you be admonish'd. Now you cannot be advertis'd, but by often discovering your conscience to a discreet confessor, who will obferve them, and warn you to avoid them.

3. It is impossible that you should Third reason.

continue long without being affaulted by temptations, and particularly against chastity. Now I maintain, that it is impossible you should resist them without frequent confession. Do what you will, if you make not often use of this remedy, you will infallibly fall, experience will convince. He that neglects help, will fall into fickness, and from fickness comes to death.

4. Confession, Theotime, is a remedy Fourth reason.

against sin. 1. Because it being a sacra-

ment, it gives grace to refift it. 2. Because it makes us renew the deteftation of fin, and the resolution not to commit it any more. 3. Because the admonitions of the ghostly father in confession awake the penitent and encourage him anew to fly from fin, and to be faithful to God. 4. Because the penitent declaring his fins and temptations to his confessor, learns from him the means to refift them; even this only discovering the temptations, is an effectual remedy to overcome them. The evil spirit fears nothing so much as to be discover'd; he is a serpent which hides himself when he would bite, and flies away when he is perceiv'd; he is a night-thief, who hath no mind to appear in open day; and he hath no greater policy to destroy young fouls, than to keep them filent in the affairs of their conscience, and hinder them from manifesting to any one the state of their fouls, to the end, that in this pernicious filence they may find no help to refift temptations, nor means to withdraw themselves from their vices. Sin (fays S. Bernard) is soon cured when it is declared, but it encreases by silence; if one discover it, from great it becomes little; and if one conceal it, of little it becomes great : S. Bern. Serm. de interiori domo, cap. 37. - I any stolen tipritov Lappy towns

After these reasons I doubt not, dear Theotime, but that you are fully convinc'd of the necessity of confessing often; and since this is an affair of great consequence, and a man commits many faults therein, I have much advice to give you, which I beseech you

read attentively, and take notice of it well.

c H A P. VIII.

manuain, that it is impo@ble you should refile

Important advice concerning confession.

ought to confess oftner, and principally when you perceive the temptations to begin to affault you most strongly. Take notice of this, for it is of great importance,

portance, and for want of practifing it, many relapse

miserably into fin.

2. Have a care of falling into the fault of many, who never think of confessing themselves, but when they have yielded to a temptation. It is a deplorable abuse, by which the devil misfortunately seduces many souls. For what a great folly is it, not to apply a remedy, till fallen into a mortal distemper, which might have been prevented if taken in time? According to the counsel of the wife man, Apply the remedy to prevent

the distemper; Eccl. xv.

3. Have a care also of another greater fault of those, who having been subdu'd by a temptation, instead of quickly raising themselves, and having recourse to the facrament of penance, yield to all occasions, neglecting to confess themselves, whether for fear, remissness, or negligence of their falvation, until some great feast obliges them, without which they would never think of employing the necessary remedy. This abuse is common amongst young persons, and the cause that many fall back after good resolutions, and often relapse deeper into vice. We must not lose courage for having fallen, but raise ourselves presently, and make use of that slip for our advantage, and stand better on our guard for the future, and not add sin to sin.

4. Confess yourself to your ordinary confessor as often as you can; so that nevertheless if you find him not, you go to another, and let not his absence be the cause of your failing to confess yourself, when there

is a reason for it.

5. Be affur'd that the devil will use all his endeavours to hinder you from confessing often; he will oppose all obstacles imaginable: sometimes he will make you believe it too much trouble, sometimes that you are not sufficiently prepared, sometimes that you have no need; at another time he makes some business fall out; oftentimes he will raise up some difgust against confession; sometimes, and very frequent. ly he will endeavour to withdraw you from it by a certain foolish shame, which he is accustomed to stir up in those of your age, by which he makes them blush at wholsome acts of piety. Nothing will be omitted to deter you from so profitable and necessary a means of your salvation. But in the name of God, Theotime, pass by all these hindrances, and look upon all those thoughts, which aim at withdrawyou from confession when requisite, as temptations of the devil.

Now to confess well, endeavour to observe diligently that which follows.

ows.

1. Examine your conscience the best Means of you can concerning the fins to which making a good you are most inclined.

2. After examination stir up in yourfelf a forrow for having offended

God, and beg pardon of him with all your heart.

3. Approach to confession with much respect and modesty, representing to yourself that you are going to appear before God, as before a judge, to implore his mercy; and if you be oblig'd to wait, before you can be confess'd, keep yourself in an humble and modest posture, praying or reading some good book.

4. Declare your fins humbly and plainly, making your confessor understand them clearly. There are some who confess but half their sins, and expect that the confessor should ask the rest; this is a great abuse, which frequently makes the confessions null, and fa-

crilegious.

confession.

5. Have a great care never to conceal a mortal fin in confession thro' shame or otherwise. That is a very heinous offence, which often happens to young perfons, and particularly for certain fins of impurity, which they dare not discover, by a misfortunate bashfulness, which makes them frequently commit great facrileges, and keeps them in a continual state of mor-

tal

tal fin. O Theotime, never fall into that disafter, by which the devil feduces, and miferably deftroys too many young persons. and to store to

6. Seek not by your confessions the esteem of your ghostly father, but to be cur'd of your fins, and di-

rected by him in the way of falvation.

7. Having made your confession, give ear attentively to the admonitions of your ghoftly father, and to the advice he shall give you, and do not imitate many, who think of nothing but calling to mind their fins, while the confessor speaks to them; have a care of this fault, for it is common, and makes one lofe almost all the fruit of confession.

8. Before your ghoftly father gives you absolution, and also whilst he shall pronounce it, beg pardon of God for your fins with much forrow and regret for having committed them, with a firm resolution, by the affiftance of his grace, to endeavour to amend. You must detest mortal fins, as infinitely opposite to the goodness of God and your salvation; and for others, you must be forry because they are displeasing to God, and always have a resolution to correct them in yourfelf as much as you can.

9. Perform your penance punctually and devoutly.

10. Accustom yourself on the day of your confesfion to reflect on the principal fins into which you have fallen: call to mind the advice your ghoftly father gave you, and purpose to put in practice.

CHAPIX.

Of boly communion.

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1-

UR Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ had so great a defire of our sanctification and eternal happiness, that he was not satisfied with the institumay (any not tue horse our Gog not ad your savods Ition

tion of the facrament of penance, wherein he left his power to his apostles to remit our sins, but by an incomprehensible excess of his love he hath left us the most blessed facrament of the eucharist, wherein he really gives himself for the nourishment of our souls, to preserve them in the life of grace, to cure them of their distempers, to strengthen them in their weaknesses, and conduct them happily unto life eternal.

From whence it follows, that the holy communion is a necessary means for those who aspire to virtue, and that those who have a true desire of their salvation, ought to make themselves worthy to approach frequently unto it. Unless you eat, saith he himself, the slesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you

shall bave no life in you. John vi.

It is from this living fountain of divine graces, dear Theotime, from whence you may abundantly draw all the favours and virtues necessary for you. You seek after wisdom, and here you receive the eternal wisdom in his proper person. You desire purity, and here you receive purity itself. You want force to preserve virtue amidst the dangers and impediments of this life, and you receive here the author of all graces, who can desend you against every thing that opposes itself to your salvation.

This being so, you must approach it frequently, and not refuse the grace of this divine Saviour, who with such an admirable love gives himself to you. Now that man evidently manifests that he hath no defire of salvation, who neglects so effectual and wholsome a means, which contains nothing less than

the author of falvation.

Altho' a general time for communion cannot be prescrib'd, because it depends upon the particular state of every one, yet I shall tell you, that it is seasonable to communicate ordinarily once a month. If you confess oftner than once a month, (which, as we have said above, may be sometimes expedient for you) you

must advise with your ghostly father concerning com-munion, who sometimes will counsel it, when he sees you profit thereby, and have an earnest desire to approach thereunto: fometimes also he will think it convenient to defer it till another time, to prepare yourfelf the better for an action of fuch consequence.

Now as the fruit of communion depends upon communicating with requifite dispositions, these are the admonitions you must observe in order to communicate well; mark them carefully, and read them every

time you go to communion.

CHAP. X. work of the min

Advice for communicating well.

PRepare yourself the best that is First thing to possible. Beg of God, in your be done to commorning prayers, the grace to prepare municate well. yourself to receive him worthily. All

the morning keep your mind much recollected, by re-flecting upon the great action you are about to perform, and fay often within yourfelf that which David faid when he prepar'd to build a temple for God. Grande opus est, non enim homini præparatur habitatio, fed Deo; I Chron. xxix. It is a great work, wherein one prepares a dwelling not for man, but for God. It is Jesus Christ, Theotime, true God and true man, for whom you prepare an habitation in your foul; you must then prepare one worthy of him.

2. Be diligent in going to church to offer your prayers to God, and confess yourself; wherein you shall ask of your confessor, whether he think it convenient you should communicate, and if he judge it fit, you

shall prepare yourself in this manner.

and about of the

Third prepa- 3 Take about half an hour before comration for com- munion, to recollect your thoughts within yourself. 1. Humble yourself profoundly munion. before our Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledg-

ing yourfelf unworthy to receive him; unworthy by reason of his greatness and sanctity, unworthy by reafon of your own fins. Is it therefore possible, (faid Solomon, having built his temple) that God should dwell amongst men? Say the same with regard to yourself. 2. Beg of him pardon for your fins, which makes you unworthy to receive him. 3. Implore his grace to receive him worthily, that is, with a pure conscience, with a lively faith, with a profound humility, with an ardent love of his goodness, and with an inviolable resolution to serve him all your life. If you know any prayers for communion, fay them, but with attention and devotion.

The time of communion being come, leave your vocal prayers, approach modeftly to the altar, with your eyes cast down, not looking on one side or the other, nor pressing to come first, but letting the crowd pass, if there be any. Reing upon your knees, adore our Lord from the bottom of your heart; and after having said I confess, &c. and Lord I am not worthy, &c. with a true sentiment of your own un-worthiness, with a firm faith, and most profound humility, receive the God of heaven, and the Saviour of

your foul.

Being retir'd from the altar, fay not presently your vocal prayers in your book, but entertain yourfelf fome time inwardly with your Saviour whom you enjoy within you. 1. Adore his immense greatness profoundly. 2. Admire his goodness, in coming to visit you himself, saying to him that which St. Elizabeth said to the B. Virgin, Whence proceeds this honour, that my God comes to visit me? Acknowledge that you are undeferving that favour. 3. Demand pardon for your fins, and forrow for having offended God, who gives himself to you with so much love and

and bounty. Protest to him, that you will always love him, and never separate yourself from him again.

4. Represent unto him the necessities of your soul, begging of him the graces you have most need of, to resist temptations, to avoid wicked company, and occasions of offending God, and to cure your depray'd habits.

5. Give him thanks for the favour he hath done you, in giving himself to you; and in acknowledgment of his benefits, offer him your soul, your powers, your life, all that you have, and all you can do to love and serve him for ever. All this must be perform'd in a short time, but with much fervour.

Return modestly from the church, and make all the rest of the day relish of this pious action. Be extreme modest in all you do; be present at the sermon and even-song, if you can, and employ some hours in reading good books. Converse not much with others, except with pious persons. Entertain yourself with religious discourses, and let this be your

chiefest recreation all that day.

You may read the Instruction for communion we have join'd to that of penance.

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CHAP. XI.

common and of Of morning prayer.

Confession and communion are Ninth means, very efficacious means to acquire morning prayvirtue, but they become unprofitable or of small effect, unless accompanied

with these which follow: morning and evening prayer, assisting devoutly at the holy sacrifice of the altar, employing of time in the knowledge of one's self, reading good books, and pious conversations, are means so necessary for virtue, that respiration and nourishment are not more needful for the support of

the corporal life, than these things are necessary for the preservation of piety, which is the life of the foul.

I begin with morning prayer, which the wife man, amongst the means he assigns to obtain wisdom, recommends earnestly to you. He shall give his heart to watch in the morning for God his creator, and he will offer up his prayers to the most high. He will open his mouth in prayer, and implore pardon for his sins; Eccl. xxxix. 6.

I would to God this excellent document were deeply engraven in the minds of men, and principally of young persons, as one of the most important for living virtuously. If you truly aspire to virtue, dear Theotime, you will have a great care to practise this instruction, which is one of the most necessary you can receive.

We owe unto God all our actions, but chiefly the first in the morning; it is that which is most agreeable unto him, it is by that we consecrate the rest unto him: By it we attract the divine blessings upon all our works, and collect the divine grace for all the day; as the *Israelites* in the desert gather'd in the morning the manna of heaven which maintain'd them all the day.

And that which is very remarkable in that manna, is, that those who failed to gather it in the morning found it not presently after, because it was melted at the rising of the sun, whereof the scripture gives this excellent reason, viz. that God who showered it down every morning, caus'd it to be dissolved with the first beams of the sun; To teach all men, that they ought to prevent the sun in praising God, and adoring him in the morning; Wisd. xviii.

But remember, Theotime, to perform this action in the manner the wife man prescribes; for he would not have it a constrain'd, negligent and undevout prayer, but a prayer with the quite contrarry quali-

ties:

ties : he faith, that the wife man will give his beart (that is, will apply his will and affection) to watch in the morning for God bis creator; that is to fay, will give his first thoughts to God, to adore him as his creator, and thank him for all his benefits, will offer his supplications in the fight of the most high; that is, will confider the greatness of God, who is present, and to whom he speaks, and confidering the infinite grandeur of the majesty of God, will attentively offer his prayers to him with humility and great modesty, and with a most profound respect, begging of God pardon for his fins, and ardently fighing after his holy grace.

To put in execution these instructions, Practice.

have a care to practife what follows.

Every morning, as foon as you are up, cast yourself upon your knees in some retir'd place, and there,

1. Adore God from your heart, acknowledging him for your fovereign mafter and creator, and looking upon him as one from whom you receive all that

you are, or have.

2. Give him thanks for all the benefits you have receiv'd from him; for the favour of your creation, of your redemption by the merits of his son Jesus Christ, of making you a Christian, a child of the catholic church, of instructing you in the necessary truths for your falvation, and for other particular benefits which you observe in yourself.

3. Humbly implore his pardon for all the fins of your life past, by which you have so much offended his

bounty, and abus'd his favours.

4. Beg of him the grace to employ that day in his fervice without offending him; make a firm refolution not to confent to a mortal fin; purpose to avoid the occasions, and endeavour to foresee those which may happen that day, to the end you may be armed against them. 5. Offer HE100 01

5. Offer all the actions of the day to him, and befeech him that he would bless them, inspire you, and direct you in all your works, that you do nothing that is not according to him, that is, nothing against his commandments; nothing but thro' him, that is, by his grace; and nothing but for him, that is, for his glory.

6. Recommend yourself to the blessed Virgin, to your good angel, and to your patron. Perform all this in a small time, but with much servour; and be assured, Theotime, that if you be diligent in this exercise, you will find the truth of that saying of wisdom itself, They who watch for it in the morning, shall find

it; Prov. viii. o furthai sodi nocumente ni nug o F

CHAP. XII.

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Of evening prayer.

Tenth means, evening prayer.

F it be a business of importance to begin the day well, it is of no less to finish it in the same manner. In the ancient law, God had not only

commanded a facrifice for every morning, but also for every night; to teach us, that as we ought to adore him in the beginning of the day, so we owe him our acknowledgment at the end of the day.

The advantages of examen of conscience at night. The principal part of this action is the examen of conscience, which is a thing wherein you ought not to fail, if you seriously desire to advance in virtue. I. It is powerful means to cure ill habits, to avoid relapsing into sin,

or readily to clear one's felf of them. 2. It helps to discover the faults one has committed, in order to amend and avoid them, to continue a hatred of mortal sin, and a will not to commit it any more. 3.

With-

Without this exercise we fall into many offences, which being neglected lead us to mortal sin; we are lull'd asleep, when in sin, without a desire or thought of freeing ourselves. 4. By this exercise, ordinary confessions are made more easy and frequent, we amend our lives, we prevent an unprovided death, we prepare ourselves for judgment by judging ourselves. And it is in this action that we excellently well practise that admirable advice of the wise man; Before judgment examine yourself, and you will find mercy when you are in the fight of God; Eccl. xviii.

Be careful then, Theotime, to perform this so holy and important an exercise daily; wherein take notice

of the order you shall observe.

At night being upon your knees before you go to

bed,

1. Adore God, and give him thanks for all his favours, particularly of that day, and preserving you from misfortunes which might have befallen you.

2. Beg of him the grace of discovering the sins you have committed that day, to demand pardon of him

and amend your life.

3. Examine your conscience concerning the sins to which you are most subject. For this effect, call to mind your chief actions from morning to night, and take notice of the faults you have committed. Recollect whether you have had any temptations that day; examine how you have behav'd, whether you have readily resisted them, or with negligence. Take notice of what company you have been in, and whether done any thing indecently, either by giving ill example in word or deed, either in yourself or others; for example, either thro' persuasion, fear of displeasing or being despis'd; or in fine, by not preventing the sin of another when in your power. Consider whether you have employed well your time all day, or unprofitably lost it; and so of the rest.

4. After discovering the fins you have committed, stir up in yourself a forrow for them, humbly beg pardon of God; make a resolution to amend the day following, and remember to confess them at your first confession.

If unhappily amongst these sins there should be any that were mortal, O God! Theotime, rise not up from your prayers till you have abundantly deplor'd your misery, and conceiv'd an extreme regret for having so grievously offended so holy and adorable a God. Beg of him pardon with all the contrition of your heart, and protest that you will confess it as soon as possible, on the morrow if you can.

Beg of him that you may not die in that wretched state. Alas! dear Theotime, is it possible a soul can sleep without fear and dread, when under the weight of mortal sin! If you have no such dread, you ought to look upon such an insensibility with horror, as a snare by which the devil endeavours to entangle you to your

eternal perdition.

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5. Recommend unto God your foul and body; defire him that he will preserve you from all misfortunes that night, and principally from sin. Offer your prayers to the Blessed Virgin, your angel-guardian, your

An important And as at the beginning of the day advice.

you demanded of God the grace to live well, fo at the end remember to beg of him the grace to die well. The end we make

beg of him the grace to die well. The end we make of every day, is an image of the end we shall one day make of our lives. Finish therefore every day as you would one day finish your life.

being despired; or in fine, by not preventing the fin

of another when in your power. Consider whether Acht Acht Octobloved well your time all day, or unconfindit left it and to of all acts.

be prefent with the three different we choke of attention, refrest, IIIX . P. A H Ore are many diff

Of affifting devoutly at the boly sacrifice of the altar.

THE most holy and adorable Eleventh facrifice of the mass is the great-means.

cellent act of our religion: it is a facrifice which our Saviour Jesus Christ hath instituted, wherein by the real oblation of his body and blood, 1. We give God the greatest honour he can receive; 2. We worthily return him thanks for his benefits; 3. We render him propitious to our offences; 4. We obtain his grace and favour. And that which the ancient law did by four sorts of sacrifices, we perform, and that more perfectly, by this alone, which is altogether latreutick, that is, honouring God; eucharistick, that is, thanksgiving; propitiatory and impetratory.

They who are present at this holy sacrifice partake of these four effects, and receive great advantages

thereby, supposing they hear it as they ought.

To affift at it therefore as we ought, three things are necessary, attention, respect, and devotion. Attention, to have the mind present, and attentive to the divine action. Respect, to be present with a great modesty as to the exterior, and a prosound reverence of the soul at this adorable sacrifice, at which the angels themselves affist with sear and trembling. Devotion, not to hear it negligently and by custom, as many times we do, but with a design to partake of the sour effects of this sacrifice, viz. to pay to God the adoration due to him; to give him thanks for his savours; to implore his mercy for our sins; to demand savours, and chiefly that of converting ourselves entirely to him, and to live for ever in his service.

Endeavour then, Theotime, to be present daily, if you can, at this sublime sacrifice; but be mindful to

be present with the three dispositions we spoke of, attention, respect, and devotion. There are many disferent ways prescrib'd to assist devoutly at this holy sacrifice; but provided you are present with these three conditions, and perform therein those four things we took notice of, adoring God prosoundly, begging pardon of him, rendering him thanks for his favours, and imploring his grace for yourself and others; this

is the most profitable method you can follow.

These four things ought to be perform'd principally after the consecration until the communion; and for the time that goes before consecration you may employ it in reciting some prayers, or, if you are capable, in following the priest in all he shall say or do in every part of the sacrifice: that is, in begging pardon of God with him during the introit and Kyrie eleison, joining with him during the prayers, hearkening attentively to the epistle and gospel, representing unto yourself fesus Christ who speaks unto you, endeavouring to keep in your memory what instruction you receive from his holy word; at the credo, making a profession of faith with the priest; at the offertory, offering with him; at the preface, when he says surfum corda, raising your heart to God to keep you more attentive, and disposing yourself to adore our Saviour at the consecration, and performing the four things we have spoken of.

CHAP. XIV.

Of labour and employment of time.

Twelfth means. It is not fufficient to begin well, and piously end the day in the manner we have said; we must also employ it prostably in some virtuous labour, there being nothing so contrary to virtue, nor more favourable to vice than it lends.

idleness, principally in young persons, as we shall shew you hereafter, Part III. Chap. VII. Wherefore, Theotime, if you sincerely desire to live virtuously, you must add this means to the former, and be persuaded that, to cultivate virtue, it is absolutely necessary for you to sly idleness, and bestow your pains faithfully

in the employment of your condition.

Hear me, son, says the wise man, and contemn not my admonitions, and you will find how profitable they will be to you in the end. Be prompt and diligent in all your works, and by this you will avoid all sorts of infirmities. (He speaks of the infirmities both of soul and body.) Eccl. xxxi. Idleness weakens the body by the want of exercise, and the ill humours it gathers. But it brings many more, and far more dangerous to the soul, making it liable to all manner of vice; for as exercise is necessary for the health of the body, so employment and labour are needful for the health of the soul; for it is impossible to preserve it without that means.

Have a care then, Theotime, diligently to employ yourself every day in
the labour of the condition wherein God has put you;
look not upon it as a thing troublesome or tedious,
but as an exercise appointed by God to employ you
therein faithfully, and as a necessary means of your
salvation, to avoid idleness, which is the mother of
all vices, and the cause of the ruin of young people.
Offer it to God every morning, and when you begin
beseech him he would give a blessing to it, and that
it may succeed to his glory and your salvation.

Now if this advice be necessary in all the different conditions of men, it is most of all necessary in the profession of students. If you are called thereto, you ought to employ yourself therein more faithfully than in any other condition, not only because God hath placed you in it, and that it is a means to avoid idleness; but also because, if you be negligent in this state, you lose the time proper to learn in, which is that of youth,

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which you can never repair: you lose the occasion of rendering yourself capable of any employment when at a proper age, as we fee it daily happens to many, who having loft their time during their studies, continue flothful and unprofitable all the rest of their life, and many times become vicious and wicked. O Theotime, you ought to make a great scruple of losing this fo precious a time: you shall give an exact account thereof at the judgment of God. The ignorant shall be unknown, (I Cor. xiv.) and be who refuseth to learn shall fall into many misfortunes. Prov. xvii. 16.

CHAP. XV.

Of the knowledge of one's self, very necessary for young people.

means.

Mongst all the means which conduce to virtue, the knowledge of one's felf is one of the most important; and it is so necessary, that it is impossible to attain to virtue without it. For this reason it hath always been fo much recommended by authors who have written of a Christian life; and the Pagans themselves have always had it in much esteem, having receiv'd as an instruction come from heaven, these two words, which were written upon the gates of the temple of Apollo at Delphos, yvals seavlor. Know thyself.

By this knowledge is to be understood a serious and frequent reflection on the inclinations of the foul, the passions which rule there, the vices which spring up or encrease, that they may be corrected with proper

remedies according as they are discover'd.

This knowledge is necessary for all men, and for want of exercifing themselves therein, the greatest part of them remain all their lives subject to many vices. But it is chiefly necessary for young persons, because they are in an age wherein their passions begin to spring and gather strength, if not corrected and restain'd

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wherefore it is highly necessary to observe them and stop them, for two reasons.

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2. Because, as St. Ambrose very judiciously remarks, The devil tempts men most violently at that time, when he sees some passions arising in their soul; for it is then, says this great man, that he excites most of all the causes, and lays ambushes to engage them more therein. Ambr. lib. 1. Offic. c. 4.

For these reasons, dear Theotime, I exhort you to this knowledge of yourfelf, as a thing which is infinitely necessary, and will be of great service; or to fay better, it is not I who recommend this means, it is the HolyGhost himself, in that excellent instruction in the thirty seventh chapter of Ecclesiasticus, by the mouth of the wife man; Son, examine your foul all your life time; and if you find ber inclining to evil, give ber not liberty. Eccl. xxxvii. He gives the reason in another place: Because a soul which bath a propension to wickedness, will destroy him who possesset ber. Ibid. vi. And in the eighteenth chapter he gives us to understand what it is, Not to give liberty to our soul, viz. not to follow her motions and deprav'd inclinations, but carefully to repress them. Run not, says he, after your concupiscence, and divert yourself from your affection; this is to be understood when it is evil. If you give to your foul all she desires, she will make you yield unto your enemies, who will rejoice at your destruction. Ibid. xviii.

So that according to the judgment of the wise man, we must know in our youth the inclinations of our soul, that we may repress them when they are wicked. It is the first knowledge we must learn, and to which we must in good time apply our studies, that we may practise it all our life. It is the science of sciences, without which all others are of no advantage: for what doth it profit us to know all things,

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and to be ignorant of ourselves? Begin your study with the knowledge of yourseif, (saith St. Bernard, lib. 2. de Consideratione, cap. 3.) it is in vain to extend your knowledge to things which belong not to you, neglecting yourself. What doth it advantage if you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul? What soever wisdom you possess, if it be not so for yourself, the greatest part of knowledge is wanting. Altho' you should know all the bigbest mysteries of faith, and all the secrets included in nature, if you know not yourself, you are like to bim who builds without a foundation, preparing a ruin rather than an edifice. And it befalls them who neglect this knowledge of themselves, as it did that philosopher, who being attentive to the consideration of the stars, fell into a deep ditch for want of looking to himself, and became the object of laughter to the spectators.

Be careful then, dear Theotime, to exercise yourfelf in the knowledge of yourself, and in moderating your affections: learn in time that you must not follow all the motions and inclinations of your soul, but that there are many which you must resist with all your power by the grace of God. To attain to this knowledge and moderation you must perform three

things.

flection upon yourself, to observe your inclinations, and the vices to which you are subject; you will discover some passion or vice, which overrules; either pride, choler, love of pleasures, or the like. You will discover others which will spring up from time to time, and which will encrease unless you carefully repress them. Sometimes it will be an unwillingness to learn, and disobedience; sometimes sloth, often impurity; sometimes lying and deceit; sometimes cursing and swearing; at other times discord and revenge, and so of others. When you shall thus discover them, permit them not to grow up:

Principiis obsta: serò medicina paratur, Cùm mala per longas invaluere moras.

The motion unto ill at first withstand:
The cure's too late, when vice bath got command.

Endeavour quickly to apply the remedies; in the third and fourth part you will find them for every one of these vices.

2. Since we cannot oftentimes gain a competent knowledge of ourselves, especially in our youth, seek to be admonish'd of your wicked and dangerous inclinations, by those who know you; as your masters, and particularly your ghostly father; give credit easily to what he shall tell you, and labour to

correct yourself.

3. Above all, be diligent in begging of God frequently the grace to know yourself, and to reform the evil which is in you. O God, enlighten the darkness of my soul, (Pfal. xvii.) that I may know all that is in me displeasing to thy divine majesty, and that I may amend it by thy grace! Offer frequently unto him that excellent prayer of St. Augustin, O God, let me know myself, and know thee. These, Theotime, are the two knowledges chiefly necessary, that of yourself, and that of God. The first produces humility and amendment, which is the beginning of virtue. The second produces charity and the love of God, which is the height of perfection.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the reading of pious books.

THE wise man will seek the wisdom of the ancients, and will apply himself to the reading of the prophets, (Eccl. xxxix.) that is, of holy

Fourteenth means, reading good books, things. It is another means which the wife man affigns you, very necessary, and extreme useful for

acquiring and preferving virtue.

We become not learned, but by the study of science; and we become not virtuous, but by our application to virtue. We have shewn above, that instruction is necessary to learn virtue; now we cannot receive instructions from masters only, but also by reading of books. We are not always near our pastors and directors to learn from them the way of virtue. Their instructions, their admonitions, their exhortations, their counsels, continue but for a time in our memories; we easily lose them if they be not maintain'd and renew'd by the reading of books, and meditation upon holy things.

For this reason the wise man in Ecclesiasticus, chap. vi. after he had said, that to acquire wisdom we must hearken to the documents of the wise, adds this other means as necessary, viz. that we must study and meditate upon the law of God. Cast your thoughts, says he, upon the precepts of God, and meditate care-

fully upon his commandments.

Charity, Theotime, is a fire which must necessarily be sustain'd by good thoughts and pious affections: if this nourishment be taken away, she becomes weak, and at length entirely extinguished; if that fail not, she is enslam'd, and daily encreases. Now the sources of these thoughts and affections is the reading of pious books, which serves as an instrument of divine grace to inspire us with them.

Example. It was by this that God wrought that admirable conversion of St. Augustin, which was begun by the reading of a book called Hortensius, treating of wisdom, as he himself recounts in the third book of his confessions, chap. iv. it was promoted by an account of the conversion of two courtiers, reclaim'd by reading of the life of St. Antony, and in fine was perfected by reading the New

New Testament, which a voice from heaven commanded him to read, faying, Take and read.

By this was wrought that wonderful change of S. Serapion, whom the reading of the gospel mov'd so strongly, that he left all his goods, and having given them to the poor, even to his wearing cloaths, he went thro' the streets with a New Testament under his arm, saying this is that which hath stripped me. O the great force of pious reading! How is it possible that so holy a means, and so powerful for the conversion of souls, should be so much neglected!

But it is not sufficient to read good books, we must read profitably: for A fruitful this effect observe in your reading these way of readfollowing conditions.

1. Read not for curiosity, and only to please the mind, but out of a desire to learn to live well; and to make your reading more profitable, remember to begin it ordinarily with elevation of mind to God, (Psal. exviii.) by which you shall beg of him the grace to learn something for your instruction.

2. Read with great respect, considering that it is God who speaks to you in your book. It is a consideration of the holy fathers, who say, when we pray, we speak to God; and when we read, he talks to us.

3. Read not many books, but only two or three well chosen, which may be proper to stir you up to virtue, and which may afford you the means: As S. Austin's confession, the imitation of Christ, the introduction to a devout life, the guide to sinners compos'd by Granado, or some other, according to the advice of your confessor.

4. Read in order, that is, beginning at the beginning, and continuing until the end, otherwise the reading will be but little profitable to you.

5. Read but little at a time, and that flowly and attentively; make reflection upon the things you read,

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endeavour to draw some good resolution from thence, and heg of God the grace to put it in execution.

6. Read often, that is, either every day, or sometimes in the week, chiefly upon Sundays and feasts.

7. Content not yourself for having read a book once over, but peruse it often. If you read it not out of curiosity, but to learn virtue, you will find the second reading more profitable than the first; you will comprehend more easily your book, you will retain it better, and put it in practice with more advantage.

Observe, Theotime, what has been here said, and carefully put it in practice. It's too plainly seen how little profit young persons receive from good books: they read ill, without concern, or reflexion; which shows how little they desire to advance in the way of virtue; as on the contrary a relish for good books de-

notes a progress in piety.

CHAP. XVII.

Advice against bad books.

When I exhort you to read good books, I advise you at the same time to fly absolutely wicked ones, which we may call the plague of minds, than which there is nothing more pernicious

to young persons.

It is one of the most effectual means the devil hath invented to corrupt minds, and which generally succeeds. He has rais'd up an infinite number of all sorts, in all languages, in all times, and still devises new ones. The greatest part are disguis'd under theappearance of learning or eloquence, or of some ingenious invention; and are by so much more dangerous, as under these disguises they conceal a mortal poison, which is deeply imbib'd in the soul. Young persons read them with pleasure

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and carneftness, and easily remember them: discourses pass, but books still remain in their hands; they have time to meditate on them, and softly digest the

venom they inspire. Who about dasses a colt yell boas

The effects are always pernicious and mortal; for some produce in ther minds doubts and errors; others pervert the judgment, corrupt good inclinations, making that appear good which is wicked, and that wicked which is good. Others teach vice, excite paffions, enslame concupiscence, and kindle dishonest love in the hearts of the most chaste; and there are none which leave not behind them much cause to repent the reading.

These books are pernicious to all, but most hurtful to young persons, being they are more apt to receive the ill impressions they make, both thro' the tenderness of their minds and the inclinations they too often have for ill. They ought to avoid them as the productions of the devil, and as a detestable poison, which hell vomits upon earth to infect and destroy

fouls.

1. Such are all heretical books, which teach errors in faith, and which attack the truths received by the church.

2. All wicked books, which turn religion and pious things into derifion; which blame the ceremonies, and received customs thereof; which scoff at persons consecrated to God, as priests and religious. Those which abuse the sacred scripture by wicked and profane applications.

3. Lascivious and immodest books, which wage o-

pen war against chastity.

4. Books which treat of love, altho' they be not faulty in expression. Such are most of the Latin and French poets, and the greatest part of romances. These books are more dangerous than those of the third sort, because those openly teach wickedness, and easily breed an a-

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version of themselves in souls which have yet some shame and conscience; but these not seeming to be directly bad, attract the mind by their fair discourses, and by the agreeableness of the subject, delighting the senses, enflame the heart with impure love.

Fly all these books, Theotime, as inventions which the devil hath found out to destroy you. You can fcarce ever read them without a mortal fin; for you either entertain evil thoughts, (a voluntary consent and delight in which is criminal in the fight of God) or expose yourself to the evident danger of entertaining them. If you have any of these books, keep them not, part with them, notwithstanding any refolution you have made not to read them. Curiofity will tempt you, and overcome you at the end; it is a ferpent, which when you think the least on it, will give you a mortal wound.

Say not that these books are well composed, that the discourse is eloquent, that you learn there to fpeak well, and many excellent things: for I shall answer you with S. Agustin, that all this is but a falle pretext, by which you deceive yourself; and that by these wicked books we learn not to speak well, but only to become bad, and commit vice with less restraint; S. Aug. lib. 2. confess. cap. 16. I tell you, you may draw eloquence from other places than from those corrupted fountains; and that eloquence or science is fatal, which cannot be acquir'd but by the loss of one's foul and eternal happiness.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of pious conversation.

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Here is yet a most important means to acquire virtue, viz. to converse with virtuous persons. Nothing hath fo great power over the mind as example, ample, whether good or bad. Man is naturally inclin'd to imitation, and to act that which he sees others do. Now if example hath such an influence over the mind, it is principally in conversation, where it hath so much more force, as it is nearer and more frequent. And if it have so much power over men, it hath a wonderful influence upon young people, as we see by experience.

For this reason one of the most important advices which can be given to those who aspire to virtue, and particularly to young persons, is that of pious conver-

fation.

It is there, Theotime, where virtue is instill'd into the mind with pleasure. The example of others makes secret, but strong impressions, which move the soul to imitation. A man insensibly embraces their judgments and maxims, learns to speak and act like them, and believes it his duty to do what he sees others perform. A noble spirit blushes to see itself overcome by its companions: and it is a sign of a wicked disposition, and of a mind totally abandon'd by God, when the example of others doth not move it, and that it persists in vice amongst the examples of virtue.

This most powerful means is also taught by the wise man in Ecclesiasticus, chap. ix. Treat, says he, with the wise and prudent; let the just and virtuous persons be your familiar companions. The reason of this counsel is given in the Proverbs; because he who converseth with the wise, will become wise. Prov. xiii.

Now there are two forts of virtuous persons with

whom you ought to converse.

1. Endeavour to affociate yourself with discreet persons, who surpass you in age as well as in wisdom and virtue. It is the advice of the wise man in the words I cited now, and also in chap. vi. where he says, Frequent the company of ancient wise persons, and seriously follow their wisdom; that is, take pleasure in

their

their society, and advantage yourself with their wise discourses and good examples. St. Ambrose gives the same advice to young people in his offices, (lib. 2.) where he says, That it is very profitable for young persons to follow wise men, because it assists them much to learn virtue, and give some proof of their integrity. And that young persons, conversing with wise men, shew, that they imitate those with whom they associate; and it is judg'd that they form their lives according to

theirs with whom they keep company.

- 2. Converse with those of your age and profession, whom you know to be addicted to virtue: their example will make a great impression upon your mind, and will delightfully draw you to imitate them: have a care to make a good choice, practifing exactly that excellent advice of St. Jerom to Nepotian; Affociate, fays he, yourself with those whose conversation may give no blemish to your reputation, and who are better adorn'd with virtue than with garments, and who delight not in curling their hair, but who promise modesty and integrity. Keep company with fuch, love their converfation, take notice frequently of their modesty, of their piety, of their virtuous actions, and endeavour to imitate them by a holy and bleffed emulation, which will not permit you to be last in the service of your creator.

CHAP. XIX.

Of devotion to the Bleffed Virgin and St. Joseph.

Sixteenth I last means which I assign, but it is also one of the most effectual, for acquiring virtue in your youth, that is, devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It is infallible to such who employ it fervently, because it affords at the same time the most powerful intercession in the sight

ight of God for obtaining his favour, and the most

perfect model for our imitation.

Next to God, and the most adorable humanity of his Son Jesus Christ, it is she whom we must chiefly honour and love, by reason of that most sublime and excellent dignity of mother of God, which raiseth her above all creatures God hath ever created.

By her we may receive all the affiftance which is necessary for us. She is most powerful with God, to obtain from him all that she shall demand of him. She is all goodness in regard of us, to apply to God for us. Being mother of God, he cannot refuse her request; being our mother, she cannot deny us her intercession when we have recourse to her. Our miseries move her, our necessities urge her; the prayers we offer her for our salvation bring to us all that we demand: and St. Bernard is not afraid to say, (Serm. 4. de Assumpt.) That never any person invoked that mother of mercy in his necessities, who hath not been sensible of the effects of her assistance.

Since the Blessed Virgin hath so much goodness towards all men, we may say she hath particularly for young people, whose frailty she knows to be the greatest, and necessities most urgent, chiefly for the preservation of chastity, most assaulted in that age, and of which she is a singular protectress. Histories are full of examples of saints, who have preserv'd this great virtue in their youth, by the assistance of this queen of virgins; and experience affords daily examples of those who have gain'd great victories, by the recourse they have had to her intercession, and who have happily advanc'd themselves in virtue under her protection, and by the graces she obtains of God for them.

Be therefore devout to the Blessed Virgin, dear Theotime; but in the name of God let it not be the devotion of many, who think themselves so, in offering some prayer to her, more by custom than devotion; and on the other side horribly displease her by

a life replenish'd with mortal sin, which they commit without any scruple. O God! what devotion is this, to defire to please the mother, and daily crucify the fon, trampling his blood under their feet, and con-temning his grace and favour? Is not this to be an enemy both to fon and mother?

to the Blessed Virgin.

O dear Theotime, your devotion True devotion to the Bleffed Virgin must not be like that, it must be more generous and more holy; and to speak plainly, if you will be a true child, and a fincere

fervant of the Bleffed Virgin; you must have a care

to perform four things.

1. Have a great apprehension of displeasing her by mortal fin, and of afflicting her motherly heart by dishonouring her fon, and destroying your foul; and if you chance to fall into that misfortune, have recourse readily to her, that she may be your mediatrix to reconcile you to her fon, extremely provoked by you. She is the refuge of finners as well as of the just, on condition they have recourse to her with a true defire of converting themselves, as St. Bernard fays, Serm. 1. Super Salve Regina.

2. Love and imitate her virtues, principally her humility and chastity. These two virtues among others render'd her entirely pleafing to God: she loves them fingularly in her children, and is delighted to affift with her favours those whom she finds to be particularly inclin'd to those virtues, according to the same

faint. Ibid.

3. Have recourse to her for things needful for your falvation; and for that end offer to her daily fome particular prayers, fay your beads, or the little office fometimes in the week, perform fomething in her honour on every Saturday, whether prayer, abstinence, or alms; honour particularly her feafts with confession and communion.

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4. Be mindful to invoke her in temptations, and in the dangers you find yourself in of offending God. You cannot shew your respect better, than by applying yourself to her in these urgent necessities, and you can find no succour more prompt and favourable than hers. It is the counsel of St. Bernard; If the winds of temptations be rais'd against you, if you run upon the rocks of adversity, lift up your eyes towards that star, invoke the Blessed Virgin. In dangers, in extremities, in doubtful affairs, think upon the Blessed Virgin, let ber not depart from your mouth, nor from your beart: and that you may obtain the assistance of her intercession, be sure to follow her example. St. Bern. Hom. 2. super Missus est.

If you perform this, you will have a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, you will be of the number of her real children, and she will be your mother, under whose protection you shall never perish. Keep well in memory that excellent sentence of S. Anselm, who presum'd to say, that as he must unavoidably perish who hath no affection to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and who forsakes her; so it is impossible he should perish who hath recourse to her, and whom she regards with

the eyes of mercy.

I shall conclude with an excellent example which I shall produce for a A remarkable proof of this truth. (Revel. of S. Brig. example.

cap. 13.) St. Brigit had a son who follow'd the profession of a soldier, and died in the wars. Hearing the news of his death, she was much concern'd for the salvation of her son, dead in so dangerous a condition; and as she was often savour'd by God with revelations, of which she hath compos'd a book, she was assured of the salvation of her son by two subsequent revelations. In the first, the Blessed Virgin reveal'd to her, that she had assisted her son with a particular protection at the hour of death, having strengthened him against temptations, and obtain-

ed all necessary favours for him to make a holy and happy end. In the following, fhe declar'd the cause of that fingular affiftance she gave her son, and said, it was in recompence of his great and fincere devotion he had testified to her during his life, wherein he had lov'd her with a very ardent affection, and had endeavour'd to please her in all things.

This, Theotime, is what real devotion to the Bleffed Virgin did merit for this young man, and for many others: she will be as prevalent for you, if you have a devotion for her, if you love and honour the Bleffed Virgin in the manner we have mention'd.

But in speaking of the devotion to Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I cannot faint Joseph pass by her dear spouse, the glorious very profitable St. Joseph. This great faint having to young per- had the fingular happiness to be chofons. fen to have the care and guardianship of the fon of God in his infancy and

youth, it must needs follow, that he will be favourable to young persons, and cherish them tenderly in that age, which he faw fanctified by the Son of God. He ferv'd him in all the necessities of life, to which he was pleas'd to submit himself for our love: he freed him from the perfecutions of his enemies; he bred him up in his infancy, govern'd him in his youth; he saw him submit to his commands; he was a domestick witness and admirer of the graces and virtues appearing from day to day in his tender years, as the fun discovers his light as he rifes higher.

Ought we not to believe that this faint, who had fo much familiarity with Jesus Christ when a child, affects with a fingular tenderness the children of Felus Christ, and particularly those who endeavour to conform themselves to that divine youth, by the imitation of his virtues, and that he should be their protector and

interceffor to him ? dods as delibertong unlusismen a

Fix your affection, Theotime, upon this good faint, and honour him with a particular respect : take him for your patron, and for the protector of your purity. Pray to him daily with much confidence, and above all in your necessities, and you will receive wonderful fuccours. Demand of him, by the care he had of the divine infancy of Jesus Christ, that he would preferve your youth in the dangers of your falvation; and that he would aid you to retain in your foul that divine Saviour, as he was employ'd once to guard him when he was in the world. our good angel ought to inspire us with three things

relieft, love, and sangulence. Kalpeck for his prelance love or devotion. XX he good- HIDe hath for us, and

confidence for the care he hath of our prefervation. Of devotion to the angel-guardian, and to the faint of ed; and, when you smane senod to any wicked, ac tion; call to mind his prefence, and he affam'd to do

OD affects us so tenderly, that he gives to every one of us an Seventeenth angel for our guardian, employing by means, devoan incomparable goodness his most stion to the anperfect creatures in our fervice, and gel-guardian. those celestial spirits which are created work bus soil incessantly to contemplate him, and continually to ferve him in heaven, to attend also upon us. O Theotime, how great is the bounty of God, to depute no less than a prince of his court for the conduct of a poor fervant! and, as St. Bernard fays excellently well, (Serm. 12. in P/al. qui babitat.) not to be content to fend his Son to us, to give us his Holy Spirit, to promife the enjoyment of himself in heaven; but to the end there should be nothing in heaven unemploy'd for our falvation, he fends his angels to contribute thereto their service; he appoints them for our

conductors in a oly

guardians, he commands them to be our masters and

Cherish particular honour for him whom God hath given you. He is always near to conduct and guard you; he inspires you with good thoughts; he affifts you in important affairs; he fortifies you in temptations; he diverts many misfortunes which otherwise would befall you, whether temporal or spiritual; and he continues these good offices by how much more you have recourse to him. What is it that you owe not to fuch a conductor, to fuch a dehe Saviour, as he was employ'd once its rabnal

St. Bernard fays, (Ibid.) that the being guarded by our good angel ought to inspire us with three things, respect, love, and confidence. Respect for his presence, love or devotion for the good-will he hath for us, and confidence for the care he hath of our preservation.

r. Shew then, Theotime, a great respect to your angel; and, when you are tempted to any wicked action, call to mind his presence, and be asham'd to do that before him, which you would not dare to com-

mit before a virtuous person. Ibid. of savin on

Love him tenderly, and recommend yourfelf to him daily. Befeech him that he would direct your actions, and protect you from the misfortunes of this life, and above all from fin, which is the greatest micontemplate him, and continually vist

3. Remember to have recourse to him in all your necessities, and principally on two occasions among others, uprince of his court for the conducted of

The first is, when you deliberate or undertake any important affair, wherein you have need of counsel and affiftance. Demand of your good angel to conduct you in that affair, so that you undertake it not, except it be according to the will of God, for his fervice and your falvation, and that he will affift you happily to finish it. This means is very efficacious to make your affairs succeed; it is impossible they should not prosper under so good a guide, who is most faithful, wife, and powerful. Ibid.

The

The fecond is, when you are affaulted with any temptation, and are in danger of offending God. When you fee, fays St. Bernard, (Ibid.) a great temptation which urges you, or a violent tribulation which approaches, invoke your guardian, your teacher, him who affifts you effectually in your necessities. This remedy, Theotime, is very powerful in all temptations, and especially in those which attack chastity, of which the angels are lovers, and particular protectors, as being a virtue which renders men like unto them, and which makes them imitate upon earth their most pure and celestial life. From whence it happens, says St. Ambrose, (Hom. 3. de Virginitate) that it is no wonder if angels defend chaste souls, who lead upon earth a life of angels.

Next to your good angel, honour particularly your patron. The names of faints are given us at baptism, that they may be our protectors and intercessors to God, and that by their prayers, and the example of their virtues, we may acquit ourselves worthily of the obligations of a Christian life, whereof we make profession in baptism. Honour and love him whose name you bear, recommend yourself daily to him, and that you may certainly obtain his assistance, remember to imitate his virtues. S. Aug. Serm. 39.

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Of keeping of festivals, and particularly Sundays.

The celebration of festivals is also a means which marvellously avails towards the acquiring of virtue, when it is well observed according to the intention of God and the church. These are the days appointed for men to attend the service of God, and the fanctification of their souls, which be-

ing well employ'd, cause them to make a great pro-

gress in the way of salvation. ni ans bas moiting

Their institution is as ancient as the world, at the beginning whereof the scripture fays, that God having created all things in fix days, gave his bleffing to the feventh, and fanctified it in memory of the accomplishment of his works. (Gen. ii.) He afterwards gave a new commandment (Levit. xxiii.) thereof, when he gave the law to the people of Ifrael, to whom he prescrib'd the manner how he would be honour'd by them on that day. He adds also other days, which he would have employ'd in acknowledgment of his most figual benfits, and for the fanctification of his people, w steel charle being a steel to

This institution hath been continued, augmented, and perfected in the new law. Continued by the fanctification of the seventh day, except only that it was transferred to the next day after the fabbath of the Jews, (S. Leo, Epift. 81.) the day of the refurrection of our Lord, of the coming of the Holy Ghoft, and of many other mysteries. Encreas'd by many feasts to honour the mysteries of our redemption, and the favours God hath bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin and the faints, Perfected as to the manner of celebrating them, which is far more elevated, more spiritual, and more perfect than in the old law, which, as the apostle fays, brought nothing to perfection; Heb. vii.

This perfection doth not confift in In what the the material facrifices, as in that law, fanttification of nor in a sole refraining from corporal feast's consists. and servile works, as the generality of ensem a olla Christians esteem it; but it requires an interior and spiritual worship, which is performed by praising God, thanksgivings, prayers, contrition, reading pious books, and other like good actions, which are the facrifices God expects from us on those days.

And, as learned Origen fays very well, The observance of the Christian Jabbath confists in leaving all Date

corporal

corporal affairs, to apply ourselves to those of our salvation; to go to church, to bear the divine word, to think upon beaven, to aspire to glory, to call to mind the last judgment; forgetting things present, to employ our thoughts upon eternal; Origines hom. 23. in Nume-

An observance which not only celebrates a festival upon earth, but in heaven to the angels, who rejoice; and to God himself, to whom, as the same author fays, the salvation of men is a great feast; Ibid.

Such a celebration of feafts as this, is a great means for acquiring virtue, and make it visibly encrease; and it is particularly for this end that it is commanded, For this reason I admonish you here, Theotime, to acquit yourself worthily thereof; and not permit yourself to be carried away by the example of many, who profane holy days by wicked actions. Some spend them in temporal employments and affairs, without respect or distinction as the most profane. Others pass them in idleness, and vain recreations, as if feasts were in-stituted for nothing else but divertisements, not confidering that if it be commanded to rest from corporal works on these days, it is to apply the mind to pious things; and that to perform it so, is to observe the feast carnally, as S. Augustin (in Psal. xxxii.) says, and after the manner of the Jews, who abuse the repose of the holy days by committing evil, and who would be less culpable, in tilling the earth all day, than in spending it in jollities. Others busy themselves on Sundays in bad actions, as in debauchery, in drunkenness, in immodest words, in quarrels, in fights, in plays of hazard, and other like disorders, which change the feasts of God into the solemnities of the devil, and afford a subject of joy (1 Lam. i.) to those wicked spirits, as they are the object (Isaiah) of abomination to God, according to the testimony of the facred scripture. facred feripture. Of the plant of the plant of the facred feripture. It is a boot one to draw yet out at 1130 boot one to draw Be

dries

The first thing Be not therefore of the number of that ought to be those, who abuse so holy and nedone on sundays. cessary an institution; spend your time religiously upon holy days in the service of God, and sanctification of your soul, according to the intention of God and his church.

r. Because the greatest hindrance of the sanctifica-

Not to offend offend God on those days; for altho' fin ought at all times to cause a horror, yet it is then more criminal. He who

fins (says Origen) celebrates a feast of sin, and not a boly day of God; Ibid. Orig. num. 15. If the fault of him who gathered a few sticks upon the sabbath was judg'd fo great, that he deserved to be stoned to death by the commandment of God himself; what crime will it be to violate the fanctity of a Sunday with a mortal fin? If a fervile work, which is not bad in itself, is esteem'd contrary to the holiness of a sabbath, how much more a fin, which infinitely dishonours God, which profanes the fanctity of his living temple, and which is the most servile of all actions? because by servile works we serve but men, and by fin we render ourselves the servants of fin, and flaves of the devil, according to that sentence of the son of God, Qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati; Joh. viii. 34. and after him of his apostle, Rom. vi. and 2 Pet. ii.

2. Examine carefully your conscience upon Sundays, and efface the sins of the past week by contrition and good works, and frequently by receiving the sacraments.

Approach them as often as you can upon these days, but particularly when you have the least doubt of not being in the grace of God; never fail on this occasion. You would not upon a holy day appear before men with dirty or torn cloaths; on the contrary, you dress yourself more decently in respect to the day; and dare you appear before God on the same day with a soul defil'd with

with sin? We adorn more richly the altars and material temples to honour God on those days, and will you permit your soul, the living temple of God, to remain in a state which infinitely displeases him, and causes a horror to him? To what (saith S. Leo) do all the exterior ornaments serve, if the interior be full of corruption and sin? Serm. 3. de Quadrag. Keep well in mind that sentence of S. Augustin, which says, that he who doth not preserve chastity in his body, and purity in his mind, only celebrates a feast of sadness and mourning upon holy days. He gives the reason, because it is impossible he should partake of real joy, whose conscience reproaches him with the thought, that his soul is inhabited by the devil, and not by Jesus Christ; S. Aug. Serm. 225. Consider attentively this reason.

3. In the third place, be careful upon Sundays and folemn feasts to be present at the divine office which is performed in the church. St. Augustin (lib. 10. cap. 33.) in his confessions acknowledges the profit he received from thence after his conversion. He saith, that at the beginning he was sensibly moved with the singing of the church, which softening his heart, drew from him abundance of tears: and this profit was also greater and more solid, when he began to be touch'd more feelingly by the sublime sense of the song, than by the song itself. This will happen to you, if you be present at the office of the church; not to discourse, to laugh, to look upon those who pass, to salute all the world, to see and to be seen, as it happens to many by a sad and deplorable abuse; but with a great interior modesty, with a mind recollected and very attentive to pious things.

4. Hear sometimes the word of God in sermons, discourses, exhortations, and instructions, which are made in the church upon Sundays and solemn feasts. At home on those days apply yourself to the reading of some pious book, profitable for your salvation. Converse with devout persons, and seek their confe-

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reners

rences. Let your recreations be more moderate on those days, and always accompanied with a modesty

agreeable to the fanctity of the day. Just mor views

In fine, employ the repose of holy days in thinking upon the (Heb. iv.) eternal rest they represent, unto which you must earnestly aspire, and in meditating on the great and happy (Isaiab xxxiii.) solemnity which shall be celebrated in heaven, where the sight of God silling the blessed with immortal joy, will keep a feast which will never have an end, and which will endure for all eternity. It is principally on these days, Theotime, that we must say with the prophet, How amiable are thy celestial babitations, O Lord! my sould doth sigh after them even unto death. Happy are those who dwell in thy bouse, who sing there eternally thy praises; and blessed is be, who by the assistance of thy grace disposes in his heart the means to mount from this valley of tears to that so desirable a dwelling. Psal. lxxxiii.

and the beginning R. H. A. P. S. XXII when the the

reived from thence after his convenient. He farm

with the of the chirch, which to come to see the parish. The min man

Add here this subject, because it contributes to the celebration of festivals, whereof I have spoken, and is a powerful means to conduct men to solid piety; wherefore I shall give you a necessary instruction, which you may make use of all your life.

Now to give you an account of The first instithis from the beginning, you must tution of paknow, that the apostles, after the ascension of the son of God, having changed the sabbath of the Jews into

the first day of the week, to be dedicated to the service of God, and to the sanctification of souls, establish'd on that day the assemblies of the faithful, where every one should be duly present, to pray in common, to

hear

hear the divine word, to affift at the celebration of the divine mysteries, at the participation of the sacraments, and at the gathering of alms for the affistance

of Christians in necessity.

The acts of the apostles give us the marks of this institution: When we were assembled to break bread on the first day of the week; and S. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, orders them, on the first day of the week to set apart what they can spare for the poor. Where by the words Una sabbati, One of the sabbath, is understood the first day of the week, so called by St. Mark, early on one of the sabbaths; that is, the first, as St. Matthew explains it.

In both these places the day of the resurrection of our Lord is spoke of, which was called from thence the day of our Lord, as St. John calls it in the

Apocalyps over thinky here is surround to smills mo

And as to the assemblies of that day, the tenth canon of the apostles speaks clearly, ordaining, that all Christians who were gathered together in the church on solemn days, should hear there the sacred scriptures, and the gospel, and be there present at the prayer, even until the end, and there communicate; Can. 10. Apost.

St. Ignatius, cotemporary with the apostles, makes mention thereof in his epistle, and other ancient authors; but above all S. Justin Martyr, who lived in the second age, in the year 150; and Tertullian, who

came 30 years after.

The first, in the second apology he made for the Christians, describes distinctly all that was performed in those assemblies, which is the same that is now done at the parish mass. See what he says of it; On the day which is called sunday, there are assembled all those who live in the town or country, and there are read the book of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, according as time permits. After the reading, he who presides makes a discourse, by which he instructs the people, and exhorts them to practise those excellent things which

which were read: afterwards we all rife, and offer our prayers to God. These things being sinished, there is an oblation made of bread and wine, and water, the celebrant continuing his prayers and thanksgiving, the people answering by their acclamations, Amen. Then is perform'd the distribution and communication of the holy mysteries to every one present. Lastly, those who are more wealthy, give their alms, which are gathered, and sent into the hands of the superior, who employs them to the necessities of the poor, of whom he is to take a

care; S. Justin apol. 2. and bookmahas in

Tertullian in his apologetick, chap. 39. fays, that the Christians assembled together in companies, forming as it were a body of an army, wherein by their prayers they encounter with God, to whom this kind of violence is very pleasing. In these meetings something of scripture is read, which serves to nourish faith, to raise hope, and strengthen the courage of the faithful. There are made necessary exhortations and admonitions to every one; and also when any one had committed a fault that deserved chastisement, he was punished by being excluded from the entrance into these holy places of assemblies, which was accounted one of the greatest punishments. Afterwards he speaks of alms, which are there given for the relief of the poor and afflicted.

Concerning which we must take notice, that during the three first ages of the church, wherein she lived among persecutions, it frequently happened that the Christians had not any appointed places, at least public, wherein to meet, but perform'd them in private houses, or often in secret. But after it pleas'd God to give peace and liberty to the church under Christian emperors, they began boldly to build churches, where the faithful assembled on Sundays and feasts, under the conduct of a pastor, who was given

them to have the care of their fouls.

A Side

It was then when the use of parishes and of the parochial mass on these holy days began to appear in its lustre; and since that time it hath always been preserved in the church, and recommended to the saithful with much care, as a thing necessary for the service of God, and the salvation of souls, for the instructions of people, and conduct of manners; and to preserve the order and discipline of the church, it hath been also commanded as a thing of obligation.

This appears in the greatest part of the councils, as well general, as particular, which have been held since, and lately in the council of Trent, which renewing and enforcing the former, in the 22d session orders bishops to advertise their people to go frequently to their parishes, at least upon sundays and solemn feasts, and to constrain them thereto by ecclesiastical censures. And in the 24th session it ordains also, that bishops carefully admonish their people, that every one is obliged to be present at the parish, to hear there the word of God, when it can be performed without considerable inconvenience.

This is the inftitution of parishes and parochial masses; from whence it is easy to gather three things, the ignorance of which occasions the contempt which is offered to them, viz. their antiquity, end, and ob-

ligation.

They are as ancient as the church herself. Their end, to govern the Christian people with order and east, every one having his proper pastor to watch over his salvation, and every pastor his church, which as it were his fold, where the sheep are assembled to receive their spiritual sustenance, the cure of their distempers, instructions and necessary admonitions; briefly, to hear by his voice that of the sovereign pastor of souls, whom he represents. And as to the obligation, it is sufficiently manifest by the end of that instruction so necessary for the salvation of souls, and the decrees of councils so often repeated, that it is

very ftrict, and that, without a great and just cause, one cannot be therein dispensed.

Things being thus, is it not a thing worthy aftonishment, to see so holy and necessary an institution neglected and despis'd after such a manner, as if parishes were but for a few of the meaner fort, for aged men, and young girls? and that Christians should nowa-days contemn a thing, the being deprived of which was heretofore a punishment for the greatest crimes?

. This contempt happens thro' different reasons. Some do it out of a pure want of devotion, which makes them apprehend the length of the parish mass upon a day dedicated to piety, and feek a short one, that they may employ the remainder of the holy day in idleness, in vanities and recreations. What shame is it for Christians to make so little account of the fanctification of feafts, of the ordinances of God and of his church, and of their own falvation, that they should rather choose miserably to spend the time of the service of God in fooleries, than to employ it in the divine honour, and the fanctification of their fouls, and to learn fomething for their falvation! It is a deplorable disorder, which made St. Aust in say, that those who employ thus the holy time of Sundays, are fettered and enflaved to the fervice of the devil, when they ought to addict themselves to prayer, and to lament for their fins in the fight of God from the bottom of their hearts. Aug. ferm 271. 11000 01 day

Others despite this obligation by a secret pride, which makes them affect a certain liberty to go where they please on holy days; a liberty which is rather a licentiousness, and a rebellion to the orders of the church, and which S. Bernard (Epift. 4.) fays is to be a servant of the greatest fort of slavery; because by this liber. ty, flying the fight and conduct of their paftor, they wander, and fall to be a prey to wolves, that is, into great disorder of life; the devil never having more advantage to feife upon a foul, than when she is not directed.

directed nor observed by any one, as the same saint

There are others who excuse themselves by reason of their affairs; but it is a very strange thing, that Christians, who have no affair of greater importance than their salvation, after they have employed all the week in temporal occupations, should not allot the Sunday, which God hath referv'd for his fervice, to the divine worship, and salvation of their souls. This excuse is very common, but not to be allowed, neither will it be accepted in the fight of God. I would gladly ask those persons, whether they pretend to be exempt from the fanctification of the Sunday? God hath given fix days for men to labour, he would have us rest upon the seventh day, to apply ourselves entirely to religious actions, and particularly to three; to honour him, to fanctify our fouls, and to me ditate upon the eternal repose which we must purchase in this life. I demand where is that ceasing from labour, and that application to pious things ? and whether this be to fanctify a holy day, or rather employ it totally in business, except the time of a fhort mass, oftentimes heard with a mind full of distractions? I befeech those, who live thus, to make the following reflection, and confider well that admonition of St. Austin in the place already cited, where he fays, Christians are commanded to repose upon festival days, and principally upon sundays, to be the better disposed to the service of God, and to cease upon those days from temporal affairs, that they may apply themselves more easily to God, as he himself exhorts us by that saying of the prophet, Cease from labour, and consider that I am God. But those who by the embroilment of cares and affairs contemn this exhortation of God, and refuse to apply themselves to boly things, give us great reason to doubt, that at the day of judgement, when they shall knock at the gate, it will be an-Invered

swered them, I know you not, begone from hence, you who work iniquity; and that thus they shall be then rejected by God, as they were negligent in searching after him, when it was in their power. Aug. Serm. 251.

In fine, there are others who absent themselves from their parishes on Sundays and solemn feasts, under pretence of piety, some saying that they have more devotion elsewhere than in the parish church; others, by reason of some congregation or confraternity which hinders them from being present; others have their ghostly sather some where else.

But the first ought to know, that sensible devotion is not always the most solid, it having frequently more of imagination than truth; and what they say they have, which makes them neglect and depart from the orders of the church, is not a devotion, but ra-

ther an illusion.

Concerning the fecond, I maintain, that it is an abuse to prefer the works of counsel before those of obligation; and that God loves obedience better than facrifice; that is, the works commanded better than the devotions which come from our proper inclination: and it is a strange thing, that there being so many days in the week, and the festivals themselves to satisfy their particular devotion, one should employ therein the days, and even hours, which are dedicated to the duties of the parish.

To the third I answer, that it were often better for them to have their confessor in the parish, altho' it were only to practise submission, and give good example. But if for good and solid reasons they confess themselves to others (which they may do possily by the advice of their pastor) they ought to manage their time so well, that this freedom which is allowed them, may not hinder them from assisting at the parish upon holy days, and giving there the ex-

ample

ample and edification which the church requires of them.

For conclusion, Theatime, I exhort you to be faithful and diligent in your parish church, and not to abfent yourself for any of the aforesaid reasons. Consider her as your mother, who hath brought you forth to Jesus Christ by holy baptism, and educated you in Christianity: she is charged with the care of your foul, the must answer for you to God, she must conduct you during your life to the point of falvation, and affift you at the hour of death. Love her tenderly as a child loves his mother, be obedient to her, receive from her your spiritual sustenance of instruction and the holy facraments; walk under her eye and government with respect and confidence; receive from others all the affiftance you can, but expect from her your principal direction, and be zealous to follow that great advertisement of the apostle, Obey your fuperiors, and be subject to them, for they watch over you, as being to give an account of your fouls that they may perform their duty with joy, and not with forrow, for that is not convenient for you ; Heb. xii. which may retard or hinder the happy Accels of his

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Instruction of Youth

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infe you at the hour of death. Lave her tenderly as a child love his methan to obedient to her, receive from her your hair parting equace of infruction and the holy tarraments. When noder her eye and Of the obstacles which divert young persons from let your principal direction, and be zealous to follow

TT is not sufficient for him who conducts another in a voyage, to shew him the way he must keep, and the means he must make use of to arrive at the place assigned; he must also advertise him of the dangers he will encounter in the way, and arm him against all obstacles which may retard or hinder the happy success of his voyage. Thus the angel Raphael, of whom we have spoken above, did not content himself to guide young Toby, but secur'd him from the obstacles which prefented themselves to him in the way; and amongst others, from the monster he met upon the brink of the river Tigris, from which he not only protected him, but caus'd him to reap a great advantage by it.

For this reason, dear Theotime, after having shew'd you the way to falvation, and the means you ought to practife for acquiring virtue in your youth, it is necessary I should discover unto you the impediments you will find in the way. This is what I shall perform in this third part, wherein I shall lay open the causes which usually destroy those of your age, by involving them in vice; and I shall shew you the means how to preserve, and even benefit yourself very much by them for your improvement in virtue. confessions (III 2: cap. 3.) deploring the corrupt

and to the .I d.P. H Outlet, who unite

The first obstacle of the salvation of youth, the want 2 to same of of instruction.

i Brustion in viscos, without, which all feience could

THE first hindrance of the salvation of young I persons, is ignorance, or want of instruction. We must know a good, that we may love it; and to know it, it is necessary we should be instructed therein, we not being able of ourselves to learn it, who bring nothing with us into the world but ignorance and fin. God fays by his prophet, that his people were sent into captivity, because they had not science; Isa. v. that is, the inftruction and knowledge of their falvation. And the wife man fays, that where there is no science, there is no good for the Salvation of

fouls: Prov. xix.

This obstacle is great, and it is the first fountain of the corruption of youth. It is by so much more to be deplor'd, as it is common and extended to many; it being certain, that the greatest part of youth is lost for want of instruction. Fathers neglect to instruct their children in true piety, and bestow all their care in educating them in vanity, in pleasures, in the love of earthly goods, and in the maxims of the world. Mafters employ often the greatest part of their labour to advance their scholars in learning, and very little to make them to understand the science of falvation; children, unacquainted with the necessity of it, concern themselves little to be instructed, and frequently fly inftruction all they can; which is the reafon why they continue in ignorance, in wicked habits, and are lost without remedy. made baim or the bar to Kas cade .!! mi For

For the proof of this truth, I shall recount you here two examples quite different. S. Auftin in his confessions (lib. 2. cap. 3.) deploring the corruption of his youth, attributes it to the want of instruction, and to the blindness of his father, who using all endeavours to advance his fon in his studies, and make him learned and eloquent, neglected in the mean time the most necessary thing, viz. the care of his instruction in virtue, without which all science could but serve to render him more displeasing to God, and more removed from his grace.

On the contrary, the scripture making a recital of the noble action of chaste Susanna, who chose rather to expose herself to the false accusations of those two infamous old men, and to be profecuted to death, than to fin in the fight of God, by confenting to a deteftable crime, which those wretched men folicited her to, attributes the cause of this holy action to her piety, and to her instruction received from her parents. The words are remarkable; She had the fear of God, because ber parents being just, had instructed her according to the law of Moses; Dan. xiii.

O dear Theotime, have a care of this ob-Practice. stacle, as of one of the greatest impediments

of your falvation; love and feek instruction; and be perfuaded the greatest evil which can befall your youth, is to be ignorant of the truths which contribute to fo happy an end; exert yourself in avoiding this misfortune, which infallibly brings on ruin: defire to be instructed, and leave no means unimploy'd for that purpose. And if God hath bestowed upon you parents or mafters, who are folicitous to put you into the path of virtue, give him thanks for this incomparable favour, and use your indeavour to improve yourself thereby. But if your parents have not fufficient care ofyour instruction in virtue, seek after it yourself by the means we have pointed at above in Part II. chap. 3, 4. and 5; and call to mind often

that excellent fentence of Solomon, a wife beart seeks instruction, and the unwife is pleas'd with ignorance; Prov. xvis figures out entire the blockers of cux vor ochob care of ole deporter boto o

CHAP. II. Salozow ie dana

The second obstacle, the too much indulgence of parents, their ill example, and the bad instruction they give their children.

T is but too true, that the ruin of children fprings most commonly from the fault of parents, who are wanting in this great obligation God hath impos'd upon them, of educating them in his fear, and difpofing them to virtue.

Now there are four defects which parents may be guilty of in this obligation, which most frequently

are the cause of the corruption and ruin of children. 1. When they neglect to instruct them in the knowledge of piety, and imprint early in their minds commit in the the maxims of virtue and their falvation. 2. When they are too indulgent,

Four faults parents may instruction of their children.

giving too much liberty, and not correcting them when they do ill. 3. When they give them bad example by their actions. 4. When they instruct them in things contrary to piety. We have spoken above of the first defect.

As to the second, it is plain how common this fault is among parents, and how it daily deftroys children. The greatest part of fathers and masters affect their children with a foolish and blind love, which regards nothing but the present and sensible good of their children, and are afraid to give them the least trouble, by keeping them within the bounds of virtue by a difcreet admonition, or by a reasonable correction; they choose rather to leave them in their wicked inclinations, which for want of correction encreasing with age, make them wicked and vicious for the remainder of this life, and miserable after this life for all eternity.

Wretched parents! who by this fort of mildness precipitate themselves with their children into depth of wickedness; like those foolish animals, which kill their young ones by vehemently embracing them. Blind fathers! who fee not that this mercy you shew to your children, is the greatest cruelty you can be guilty of in their regard; and you would not be fo cruel, if you took away their life with your own hands; it being certain, that by this inhumanity you would but deftroy their bodies, whereas by your mildness you cause the ruin and the eternal loss of their fouls. The time will come when your children, whom you thus indulge, will curse you, will require of God revenge against you, and will acaccuse you as the authors of their misfortunes; witness he who being condemn'd to death, cry'd out aloud, It is not the judge, but my mother who is the cause of my punishment.

Your criminal fondness will one day draw upon you and your children the curse of God. Upon yourselves, because you neither instructed nor corrected them, when requisite. Upon your children, because thro' your indulgence, they gave themselves over to vice and

disorder.

See the example of the high priest Heli above, and learn from that terrible punishment God laid upon him, what you ought to expect: for all the miseries which befell him, his children and whole house, had for their first and principal source his great indulgence to his children in not correcting them. Hear the testimony God himself gives thereof; I will judge, says he, the house of Heli, by reason of his iniquity, because having knowledge of the wicked life of his children, he hath neither reprehended nor corrected them.

1 Kings iii.

I cannot fufficiently exaggerate this fault of parents, Theotime, to raise in you so great a horror as it deserves. It is to admonish you, if God hath bestowed upon you wife and virtuous parents, who instruct you in virtue, and reprehend you when faulty, that you acknowledge the obligation you owe to God, and make good use of this high favour, by rendering yourfelf pliable, and eafy to be instructed by their admonitions. But on the contrary, if your parents, forgetful of their own duty and your falvation, fail to reprehend you when faulty, do not fet a value on fuch indulgence, but look upon it as a thing the most pernicious and destructive, and have a care lest you be ruin'd by their misfortunate indulgence. Beg of God very earnestly that he would change their hearts, and give you masters who may supply their defect, and take notice of your actions to redrefs them, when you shall wander never so little out of the path of virtue. or no would out to snew a common

I say the same, if your parents be not only negligent in reprehending you, but, what is yet worse, if they give you ill example, teaching you, as it often happens, by their actions, to love the pleasures of this life, to defire riches, to affect vanity, to be proud, ambitious, cholerick, feeking revenge, not fuffering the least injury, immodest in words, addicted to feasting, to drunkenness, to impurity, and other like things; and yet more, if they be so miserable as to teach you by their discourses any of these vices, approve or praise you when you have committed them: O God, dear child, stand in fear of all these occasions, your falvation cannot be in greater danger; and having recourse to God, befeech him that he would permit you to discern good from evil, that he would strengthen your mind against the bad impressions you shall receive, and not permit you to be destroyed by their fault, who ought the first to contribute to your salsail a horror of morest fire, which infinitely dinoitsy

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Additions to the preceding chapter.

Revising this book for the present edition (an. 1688) another considerable obstacle to the salvation of young persons occurred, which I think proper to insert; I mean, the supine negligence of some confessors, who give themselves very little trouble concerning the confestions of young persons: looking upon them as attended with no difficulty and of small importance, they content themselves with asking a few questions, easily crediting their answers, and, after affigning some prayers by way of penance, fend their penitents away with absolution, though they are as ignorant and as criminal as when they came. Hence it often happens, that young persons, who confess out of custom, more than a rational motive regarding their falvation, make bad confessions, accusing themselves by halves, either thro' ignorance, a want of due forrow, or resolution of amendment. Sometimes, and too often, they conceal their fins from their confessor, thro' a false shame, which frequently retains them in a state of damnation for many years by their repeated relapses, and numerous facrilegious confessions, till some judicious director opens their eyes and disengages them from their wretched condition. www in fishermon , winini Arab

If directors were well appris'd how wide a field lies open to them, of doing immense good by their care, or excessive mischief by their negligence in hearing the confessions of young persons, they would be convinced that none more deserve their zeal and attention; above all they would have a special care of three important points. First, to discover if nothing has been concealed through shame or fear, and if so, to make them sensible of the greatness of the evil, and repair it by a general confession of their whole lives. Secondly to imprint in their minds a fear of God and a horror of mortal sin, which infinitely displeases him.

him, especially the sin of impurity, the most usual crime of young persons, and their most dreadful enemy. Thirdly, to find out whether they are habituated in this or any other sin, as disobedience, sloth, swearing, and to withdraw them from it by their salutary admonitions, and plant in their souls the virtues of chastity, obedience, diligence, patience, love of their neighbour; in a word, to teach them to love God above all things, and prefer his holy grace to all the world affords. Such is the conduct of prudent confessors in regard of young persons, and it is certain God gives a blessing to their endeavours, as daily experience evinces. Let us beseech him to inspire all with this zeal and care.

But for you, Theotime, I exhort and advise you to reflect what condition you are in, lest it be like what I have described; whether your confessor hitherto hath not neglected you, leaving you in bad habits, and perhaps in sins you have never confess'd. If this be the case, my dear child, recover as soon as possible from such a dangerous state, where no less than your salvation is at stake: seek a prudent director who can assist you, is willing to take upon him the care of your salvation, and will observe in your regard the three points above mentioned.

CHAP. III.

The third obstacle to the salvation of youth, untrastable ness.

SAint Jerome says excellently well, that altho' the depravity of children springs often from the parents and master's fault, yet it very frequently proceeds also from the children themselves, who will not receive instruction; and this fault is call'd untrastableness. St. Hier. in cap. 6. Michae.

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This untractableness is a want of submission to the conduct of others, or a fecret prefumption of one's felf, by which one will not be informed of the truths he ought to know, nor receive advice in those things he ought to do, nor be reproved and corrected when he has err'd, nor exhorted to good when departed from it.

A very bad qua- This vice is one of the worst quality of the mind. lities a mind can be infected with.

For if we regard its causes, it pro-Its causes. ceeds from pride, which makes them contemn all that comes from another;

or from obstinacy, or confidence in their own judgment, or from a too great lightness of mind, which confiders nothing, and despises the most important

things. If we consider its effects, it alone is Its effects. capable of leading youth into all manner of vice, being it takes away all means of correction or amendment; for how should one do good if he will not know it? How correct his faults if he will not be rebuked? The fick who will not own his diftemper, and rejects the proper remedies, must not expect a cure.

For this reason the facred scripture in many places, and principally in the Proverbs, where it instructs more particularly young people, speaks so effectually against this vice, as being one of the greatest obstacles of their falvation, and exhorts fo frequently young persons to receive instruction, counsel, and admonition.

As for instruction, it says, that be who rejects wifdom and instruction is unhappy. Wisd. iii. The wife receives precepts in his heart, and the unwife cannot endure instruction. Prov. x. The heart of the wicked seeks evil, and the beart of the just searches after knowledge. Ibid. xxvii. There is more amendment exbottog . Hier in cor. 6. Michele.

petted from a fool, than from bim who thinks himself

wife. Ibid. xxvi.

As for counsel, it says, that the fool thinks all well that be does, but the wife bearkens to counsel. Ibid. xii. He who confides in his own beart, that is, in this own mind and conduct, is a fool; and he who walks wifely shall be faved. Ibid. xxviii. Give ear, fays it, to counsel, receive instruction, that you may be wise at the end

of your days. Ibid. xix.

What doth it not fay of reprehension? It says, that be who loves correction loves knowledge, and be who bates reprehension is a fool. Ibid. xii. The wicked doth not love bim who reproves bim, neither doth be feek the conversation of the wife. Ibid. xv. He who hath rejested discipline despises his own soul; be who yields to reprebensions possesses bis beart. Ibid. An impious man never blushes, but the just corrects his ways. Ibid. xii. An obdurate beart will make a wicked end. Eccl. iii. He who hates reprebension shall die. Prov. xv.

But above all, take notice what it fays in the 29th chapter of the Proverbs. A sudden destruction which never shall be repair'd will befall him, who obstinately contemns correction. What can be faid more to shew the greatness of this evil, and raise an apprehension of

the heinousness of it?

maxim, to do all things with at Wherefore, Theotime, guard against this vice, as one of the greatest obstacles to your salvation; acknowledge it if you be infected with it, and use all the endeavours possible to be cur'd, and to obtain a tractable mind, which loves to be instructed, counfell'd, reprov'd, and exhorted to good. Now to obtain it, this is what you must do.

1. Beg daily of God this spirit, and demand it earneftly as a thing most important, and on which all

your good depends.

2. Keep always in your mind that excellent advice of Solomon. Son, bearken to me, and depart not from my counsels, lest at the end of your life you be constrain'd to lament, and be forry for your untrastableness, saying, Why have I resused to be directed? Why have I not willingly received corrections? Why have I not hearkened to the voice of those who have instructed me, and why am not I made trastable and obedient to my masters? Prov. v. But alas, Theotime, it will be too late to lament the evil when it happens, and when there will be no remedy.

A most important advice for young persons. 3. Persuade yourself that you are in an age full of ignorance, subject to many failings, wherein you are not able to conduct yourself, but that you necessarily stand in need of the direction of others more expert. This

confifts in instruction, counsel, reprehension, and exhortation. And in a word, that during your youth, tractableness and submission to the instruction of others is so necessary, that on this virtue depends your good education, your advancement in virtue, your happiness in this life, and your eternal salvation in the next

4. Love to be instructed in virtue, and be inclined to learn good willingly of any one. Ask counsel freely, even in those things wherein you think you have sufficient understanding. O what an excellent maxim, to do all things with advice! It is the maxim of the wise man; Son, do nothing without counsel, and you will not repent when the work is done. Eccl. xxxii.

Be not offended when you are reprov'd for your faults. It is a great sin (says St. Jerome in cap. 5. Amos) to bate bim who reprehends you, principally if the correction proceeds from the love he hears you. Defend not yourself obstinately, it is the sign of great pride; but on the contrary, humbly receive a reproof, acknowledge your fault, and endeavour to amend.

5. Remember, that tractableness doth not only consist in willingly receiving instruction, counsel, reprehension,

prehension, and exhortation, but also in advantaging yourself by them, and putting them in practice.

For a conclusion, I shall give you that excellent saying of St. Ferome; It is good to obey your elders, and to follow the orders of superiors; and, after the rules of scripture, learn from others the path of life which you ought to follow, and make not use of a very ill-master, viz. your own presumption. Hier. Epist. ad Demetriadem de virg. servanda.

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The fourth obstacle, inconstancy.

TF untractableness be very common among young people, inconstancy in good is yet more frequent, and is a very great impediment to their falvation. Some young spirits are found tractable and pliable to receive instruction, counsel, and admonition, and those who are not so, are often cured of their untractableness by proper methods of lenity or severity. But it's likewise certain that young persons are not always steady in practifing what they are taught. They have a spirit subject to change, which adheres to all forts of objects, lets itself be carried away by all its first motions, be tossed by different passions, which permit it not to continue long in the fame course. They are scarce able to make one folid refolution, chiefly in that which concerns virtue, much less put it in practice when made; the first occasion carries them away, and makes them forget all their good defigns. It this new merved brown a rise blance

If inconstancy be not corrected in good time, it proves a great obstacle to the salvation of young people, and absolutely hinders them from advancing in virtue. A plant cannot take root in a moving sand,

nor virtue in a light mind, which changes upon all occasions. here in med putting them in the deliver

For this reason the wise man gives you that admirable advice, Theotime: Turn not at every wind, go not into every way, be firm in the way of our Lord. Eccl. v.

This inconstancy in good springs principally from three causes. In the new years have Judiot of idente

Three causes 1. From a levity natural to that age, which renders young persons inof inconstancy. constant in all their actions. They are changeable in all their inclinations, thoughts, defigns, and resolutions; hence it comes that they are so inconstant in good, when they have begun to

2. It springs from their not being folidly convinc'd of the importance of their falvation, and of the neceffity they are under of addicting themselves to vir-

tue in their youth.

of 3. It comes from the want of conduct, and from their not being capable to conduct themselves, and not taking the counsel of others for ordering their life; or if they take it, it is but a short time, they foon reject it, and abandon themselves to the motions of their inconstant mind. mind and min what svent

For a cure of this inconstancy a remedy must be ap-

plied to these three causes. afondo lo strol Mr. of some

First then, Theotime, endeavour to correct in yourfelf, as much as you can, that natural levity of your age, which makes you subject to change in the greatest part of your actions. Be conftant in all that you perform; change not eafily your resolutions, your enterprifes, nor your employments, except with reason and counsel: in a word, govern yourself by reason, and not by fancy and caprice on too od vometerom il

Secondly, Labour to fix your mind in piety by good thoughts, and frequent reflections on your falvation, and on the necessity you are under of living virtuously in your youth; the reading of the first

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fh ab part of this book will serve for that end, if read attentively, and with due reflection.

Thirdly, Submit yourself to the conduct of a prudent confessor; fol- An important low his counsels, and the rule of life advice. he shall prescribe; give him an ac-

count of your actions from time to time, that he may fet you in a good way when you are out of it; person.

form nothing, of how little consequence soever, without his counsel, or that of some other prudent person.

But above all, beg of God frequently that he will bestow upon you a mind constant in good resolutions, and six you in piety by the conduct of his grace. O God, direct my steps, that is, my actions, in the path of thy commandments, that I may never wander out of it. Psal. xvi. Have often before your eyes that excellent sentence of the wise man; A religious or pious man continues six'd in virtue like the sun, which never loses his light; but the fool, that is, a sinner, changes like the moon, which is not constantly in the same state. Eccl. xxvii. See, Theotime, which of the two ranks you chuse; you would not be thought a fool by men, and yet you are certainly such in regard of God, if you waver in his service.

CHAP. V.

The fifth obstacle, a shame of doing good.

A Mong the means the devil hath invented to pervert fouls, there is none which he makes a greater advantage of than the shame of doing good; a shame by which he deplorably seduces weak minds, and principally young persons; who being more apt to receive the impressions of fear and shame, give occasion to that spirit maliciously to abuse their facility and natural shamefacedness;

to make them conceive that shame and confusion in respect of virtue, which they should only have for sin,

For this effect he puts into their The means the mind these false and vain imaginations; devil uses to that virtue is contemned amongst men, raise shame in that they are little esteemed who folyoung persons. low it, that if they should apply themfelves to virtue they should be de-

fpised, yea, even mocked at. He actually draws on them the contempt and fcoffs of others; and by these artifices he with-holds them from the way of virtue, stopping and stifling in them, by this foolish shame, all the good thoughts and defires they had conceiv'd concerning their falvation. And fometimes this unhappy shame gets such powerful possession over their minds, that they not only blush to do good and appear virtuous, but even glory in their vices, and have a kind of confusion not to be as wicked as the most vicious; as it happen'd to St. Augustin, who deplores his misfortune and blindness in this point, in the second book of his confessions, chap. 3. We shall relate his words in the following chapter.

If this pernicious shame hath taken possession of your mind, you must account it one of the greatest obstacles to your salvation; and if you labour not in good time to overcome it, it will infallibly deftroy you. To conquer it, arm yourfelf with these reflections. 2 h nijub ab fi a o

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1. Why do you blush? Are you ashamed of virtue, and the service Remedy. of God, than which there is nothing more honourable in the world? You account it a glory to serve a prince upon earth, and will you blush at the service of the king of heaven, your sovereign Lord, to whom you owe all that you are? What strange blindness! But take notice, that one never blushes, except it be for something which is either wicked or indecent, or too abject or unworthy of of one's felf: so that if you are ashamed of virtue, you put it into the rank of one of these; what an

indignity!

is

of

2. Before whom do you blush? Before the wicked, whose judgment is absolutely perverted, who judge That to be wicked which is good, and That good which is wicked, having no other rule for their opinion than their deprav'd inclinations. If they contemn you, it is because they hate virtue, and those who follow it. The service of God is an execration to sinners, says the wise man, Eccl. i. 32. Fools detest those who fly from vice. Prov. xiii. 20. He who walks in the path of virtue, and fears God, is despised by the world and wicked persons, who follow the infamous track of vice. Ibid. xiv. 2. If the esteem of men move you, why seek you not after the esteem of wise and virtuous men, who respect and honour you when you do well?

3. Call to mind that dreadful menace which the Son of God utters to those who blush at his service; He who shall be asham'd of me, and my words, I will be asham'd of him when I shall come in glory; that is, he will not acknowledge him for his. Luke ix. Remember that fearful confusion, which at the day of judgment will cover the face of those who have blush'd in this life at the service of God, when their sins shall be exposed to the view of the whole world; and on account of the shame they had for virtue, they shall be abandoned to eternal disgrace and confusion, which shall never be blotted out of the memory of the angels and saints, as the scripture testifies. I will give them over to eternal shame, and an ignominy which shall never end. Jerem. xxiii. 40.

O dear child, beg frequently of God, that he would strengthen your Practice. mind against this misfortune, which is

mind against this misfortune, which is nothing but the pure imagination of a weak spirit. Accustom yourself betimes to perform good works freely,

freely,

freely, without regarding what others speak or think. Despise their contempts, and mock at their scoffs, and reslect what great folly it is to prefer the esteem of men before your eternal salvation; and to please a small number of abandon'd wretches, with the displeasure of all wise persons, of all the saints in heaven, and of God himself. Weigh well this reslection.

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The fixth obstacle, wicked company.

ARTICLE I. How burtful it is.

Dear Theotime, how should I rejoice, if I had eloquence enough to make you, and all those of your age, understand the greatness of this impediment of your salvation, and clearly set before your eyes the multitude of young people, who are daily ruined by wicked company!

A fnare of the devil fets his fnares for youth; and devil for young those whom he could not destroy either by the want of instruction, or the indulgence of parents, by the un-

tractableness of their minds, or by inconstancy, or a shame of doing well, he perverts by drawing them into ill company. Their discourses, their examples, and wicked conversation, serve him as instruments to corrupt the most holy, and subvert the state of a good conscience; and frequently by one of these means he has bred great disorders in souls almost ignorant of sin, and hitherto virtuous amidst the most dangerous occasions.

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O God! is it possible that this malignant spirit finds no instruments more powerful to destroy men, than men themselves? that they should be servants and ministers to execute against their own brethren the rage he has conceived against them, and the execrable design he hath laid to involve them with himself in eternal damnation? I know not whether I should most deplore, those who contribute by their discourse or example to the ruin of their brethren, or those who suffer themselves to be perverted by them for want of slying and avoiding their company, more

than those infected with the plague.

Concerning the first, (Rom. xiv.) are not they fadly miserable, to destroy by their conversation those for whom Jesus Christ hath died? as if it were not sufficient to damn themselves, (2 Tim. iii.) but also to be the cause of the damnation of their brethren; to be the authors of their corruption, and of an infinite number of fins which they commit; to be the instruments of the malice of the devil, and perform themselves the office of that detestable fiend, which is to move men to fin, and precipitate them into hell. Wretched Cains, (Gen. iv.) you shall answer for the souls of your brethren; the voice of their blood which you have spilt, that is, of their salvation which you have ruined, cries to God for vengeance against you; he will feek for it from your hands, you must render him an account of it, soul for soul. Wo, wo, says the son of God, to that man by whom scandal happens; Matt. xviii. that is, who draws others into fin.

And as for the others, are not they as much to be deplor'd, who permit themselves thus misfortunately to be perverted by the conversation of the wicked? which often befalls them after they have been well advised, that there is nothing more dangerous for youth than wicked company, that it is the rock where many are irreparably shipwreck'd; and also frequently when they had made experience of it themselves,

to the great detriment of their falvation. After all this, not to avoid these precipices, but to go wilfully without fear into fuch company, which they ought to shun more than death itself, O God! what a deplorable blindness!

I conjure you in the name of God, dear Theotime, to have a care of this impediment to your falvation, and not thus miserably lose yourself for want of precaution; or to speak more properly, it is not I who make this exhortation to you, but the Holy Ghost. Hearken to the prophets, who cry out to all those who desire to be saved; Retire, retire, depart from sinners, touch not that which is unclean; Isaiah xii. Fly from the midst of Babylon, and let every one apply his thoughts to the salvation of his soul; Jer. li.

Give ear to the wife man, who exhorts you with a fatherly affection; Son, if sinners entice thee, consent not: If they say, come with us, O my child, walk not in the way with them, restrain thy foot from their path; for their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. And afterwards, he fays, Take not pleasure to follow the wicked, nor be delighted with the ways of the impious; fly from them, and walk not in that road, decline

and depart far from it; Prov. i. and iv.

ARTICLE II.

Two things hurtful in wicked company, discourse and example.

HE same holy spirit doth admonish you, that there are two things in the conversation of the wicked which we must stand in dread of, their discourse

and example.

As for the discourses, S. Paul the apostle cries out aloud to all, Permit not yourselves to be seduced; for wicked discourses corrupt good manners; 2 Cor. xv. Avoid (fays he to Timothy) the profane discourses discourses of the impious, for they advance wickedness; 2 Tim. ii. S. James says, that the tongue is a fire, which being enkindled from hell, inflames souls with sin; James iii. David says, that the mouth of sinners is an open sepulchre, from whence issue noisome stenches to infect souls; Psal. v. That the wicked have a tongue of a serpent, and carry the poison of asps in their lips; Psal. cxxxix. by which they envenom those who

give attention to them.

Now if the vicious sometimes forbear their wicked discourses, their example never fails to make strong impressions. He who toucheth pitch, fays the wife man, shall be defiled, and be who converseth with a proud man, will be infected with pride; Eccl. xxiii. Contract not friendship with an angry and cholerick man, lest you imitate his example. He who converseth with the wife will become wife; Prov. xxiii. 24. A friend of fools, that is of finners, will be like unto them. Example hath an incredible force upon the minds of young persons, and principally to incline them to evil. The friendship that is contracted with the wicked produceth approbation, and approbation invites to imitation. O friendship, what an enemy art thou (faith S. Augustin) to the good of souls! O blindness of mind, which caused us to commit wickedness only by imitation, and to please others, when they said, Come let us do some bad action, and I was ashamed not to be impudent ! S. Aug. lib. confes. 9.

In fine, Theotime, that you may clear- A considerable ly see the height of disorder to which example what evil company may bring young men, bad company hearken to what the same saint reports can do.

of himself, deploring the miserable state to which he was reduc'd by that means.

I went, fays he, headlong into vice with such a blindness, that amongst those of my age I blush'd not to be
as wicked as they, when I heard them glory in their
sins, and brag by so much more, as they were
L 2 more

more impious. And I had a mind to commit evil not only for the pleasure of the action, but out of a desire to be praised. What is there in the world but vice which deserves to be blam'd? and I was so depraved, that I sought to be more vicious, lest I should be blamed: And when I could not equal the most impious of my companions in wickedness, I seigned sins which I never did, lest I should be accounted more contemptible, as I was more innocent, and lest I should be esteemed less infamous, as I appeared more chaste. See with what sort of companions I conversed, when I walked in the wretched path of Babylon, that is, in the wicked life of my youth, in the stinking dirt wherein I wallowed, as if I had rolled myself in precious odours and sweet perfumes; Lib. 2. confes. cap 3.

This was the deplorable state to which wicked company brought S. Augustin in his youth; a state out of which he could not be drawn but with terrible difficulty, and by a particular miracle of divine grace,

as we have shewn above. Part I. Chap. 12.

ARTICLE III.

Of four forts of wicked companions which must be avoided.

Libertines. FIRT, Theotime, abhor the company of those who make open profession of vice, as impious persons and libertines; and of all those who seek not to conceal the greatest vices, as impurity, swearing, drukenness, but glory in them. They who rejoice, says the wise man, at their wicked actions, who take pleasure in their greatest sins, Prov.ii. who scoff at virtue, and who endeavour to corrupt you, and allure you to them.

2. Fly as from the plague those who Lewd discourses. scoff at virtue, who sollicit you to fin, or who entertain you with lewd discourses,

discourses, altho' they appear not openly vicious in their persons. Wicked discourses are always prejudicial, from which side soever they come; they constantly produce the same effect, which is to introduce sin into the soul of him who wilfully gives ear.

3. Avoid the company of some who Dissemblers.

dissemble more, and yet are no less dangerous, who will not solicit you openly to sin, but divert you from the exercise of virtue, as from prayer, from frequenting the sacraments, from reading good books; who tell you those things are neither convenient nor necessary for you; that they are not proper for you at this time, that you have something else to do; and instead of these entertain you only with vain discourses of pleasures and pastimes, of the hopes of the world, of vanities and grandeurs. These conversations, Theotime, are very hurtful, altho' they seem not so; for they attack virtue in the root, and silently destroy it.

Fly the company of idle and loitering Idle young

young people, who have no employ- persons.

ment, or comply very ill with that wherein they are engaged. Their example will bring you to flothfulness, they will induce you to it by their discourses, they will persuade you to leave your employment and work, and pass your time in merriment; they will teach you to love play, to haunt tippling-houses, to frequent balls and comedies; and from this idle life they will cast you into disorders. Observe well this advice, and assure yourself absolutely, that there are no companions more dangerous for you than they.

For conclusion, Theotime, remember one thing, that sooner or later the divine vengeance will surprise the wicked, whether visibly or invisibly. The fire of the divine choler, says the wife man, will be kindled against the

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assembly

assembly of the impious, and against the rebellious, who refuse to obey the commandments. Eccl. xvi. 16. If you be found amongst them, you will be involved in their ruin. The way of sinners seems sweet and agreeable, but in the end they will find death, darkness, and damnation. Ibid. xxi. 10. For this reason I say to you with the prophet, Withdraw yourself from them, lest you be involved in their sins and ruin. Num. xvi. 26. Woe be to him, who being forewarn'd, avoids not this precipice and eternal missortune.

See a little below, Chap. 8. Art. 3, the history of a young man, who being perverted by wicked company, died in despair, crying out, Woe be to bim who

bath seduced me.

We might here speak of conversation with the good; but we have plac'd that before amongst the means to acquire virtue, Part 2. Chap. 18.

CHAP. VII.

The seventh obstacle to the Salvation of youth, idleness.

of your salvation, and that which produceth or nourisheth all the precedent, and many others. Idleness brings ignorance and want of instruction, which cannot be attained without labour. It is that which breeds untractableness; for a slothful mind will learn nothing: the dread of taking pains, makes it esteem itself sufficiently knowing, and resuse to receive the instruction and counsel of others, to avoid the trouble of putting them in practice. The slothful, says the scripture, accounts himself wiser than many, who instruct others with their documents. Prov. xxvi. 16. Idleness is the cause of inconstancy; the slothful will, and will not: Ibid. xiii. 4. To day he desires one thing, to morrow another; to day he will be good,

to morrow he changes his resolution. Idleness causes a shame of doing well, and destroys that courage which is necessary in the pursuit of virtue. Fear makes the slothful lose courage. Ibid. xviii. 9. Idleness makes him seek, and find wicked company, and dangerous recreations. In fine, idleness is commonly the mother of that wretched sin, which so deplorably destroys a great part of youth, the sin of impurity, of which we shall speak in the following chapter.

In a word, there are no fins, no disorders, no occasions of destruction, whereof idleness is not the cause, and brings with it. This is the reason which made St. Bernard justly call it The sink of all temptations and wicked thoughts, the mother of follies and step-mother of virtues, the death of the soul, the sepulchre of a living man, the receptacle of all evil: and the Holy Ghost himself names it, the mistress which teacheth many sins; multan malitian docuit otiositas.

Alas! Theotime, is it not a deplorable thing to fee the fin, which is the How common fountain of fo many evils, so common among st young among youth, that it feems natural to persons.

them? You fee the greatest part live

after an idle and negligent manner, flying from labour like death itself, not applying themselves to any constant exercise; or if they undertake any, they prefently abandon it, or at best acquit themselves very ill of it. They are fond of nothing but pleasures and diversions. Play, parties of pleasure, good chear, sleeping, are the most considerable employments of their life, and most serious occupations.

And from thence spring all the disorders into which we daily see them How pernifall; an unbridled affection to the pleacious. sures of this life, disrelish of virtue,

ignorance of the most necessary truths, forgetfulness of God and eternal salvation. From thence wicked companions, and the occasions of debauches; from

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thence

thence all vices and bad inclinations, which encrease in their fouls more abundantly than ill weeds in a fertile earth, which the gardener's hand neglects to cultivate. In fine, from hence they grow slothful and unprofitable during their whole lives, for want of qualifying themselves in their youth, to say nothing of the vices into which they are plunged, and from which

they never get clear.

I would to God it were as easy to root out this vice from the fouls of young people, as it is to demonfrated the deplorable effects and vicious confequences of it. But this evil hath in fuch a manner taken possession of their hearts, that they will not so much as know it, for fear of being obliged to forfake it. O Nothful, fays the wife man, bow long will you fleep? when will you awake from that profound fleep of idleness, which hath made you so drowsy? and which will bring you to poverty, which will surprise you suddenly, and seize upon you like an armed man. Prov. vi. Open your heart, dear Theotime, to the voice of the Holy Ghost, in order to banish idleness from thence, or hinder it from ever coming there.

The remedy. For this end fortify your mind against this vice by the following reflections,

which I befeech you to read often and attentively.

1. Confider that all men are born Allmen are for labour, God hath obliged them obliged to la- thereto by a folemn fentence which he bour. pronounced at the beginning of the world. In the fweat of thy brow thou

shalt eat thy bread, till thou returnest to the earth from whence thou wert taken. Gen. v. If then you would be exempt, leading an idle life, you refift the will of God, and break the order he hath fo folemnly established. What reason can you alledge for exempting yourself from so just and general a law, from which nobody was ever dispensed with? and if you are mont a endounded to enounce

not, with what affurance can you perfift in an idle

2. If men be obliged to labour all their life-time, they have yet a stricter obligation to it during their youth, because if that age be not exercised in virtuous undertakings, it heaps up many vices and wicked habits, which continue all the rest of their life. Because youth is the pro- Chiefly young per time to cultivate the mind, and men. form it to good, and wherein only they may make themselves capable of an employment for life. Time lost in any age never returns; but there is this difference, that time lost in other ages may sometimes be recover'd, but time lost in youth is irreparable.

3. Consider attentively the grief you will one day feel, for losing the time of your youth, when you shall for the loss of find yourself unsit for employments, time in youth. and uncapable of any good, as it hap-

pens to many: you believe it not at present, but one day you will be sensible of it, when it is too late.

4. If this grief at present move you not, the exact account you shall give The account to God of the ill-spent time of your that must be youth at his judgment, ought to make given.

you tremble. In that dreadful judg-

ment all your life shall be set before your eyes in order, one part after another; and the first article of the account, which shall be examin'd, will be that of the employment you have followed in your youth: what will you answer to this demand? There you will distinctly discover all the disorders which have sprung from that first fault; the ignorance it hath caused in you, the fins it hath made you commit, the vices wherein you have been involved, all the good you have been render'd incapable of. What have you

to answer to all these things? And if you cannot justify yourself, what must be the consequence?

Many damn'd for the ill fpending of their youth. 6. How many others are there now in hell, who acknowledge the origin of their damnation to arise from the ill spending the time of their youth? If they could but hope for one sole moment of time, which you have now

in your power, O God, what would they not do to obtain it, and bestow it profitably? Is it possible that their misery doth not move you, and that you will not grow wise at other men's expence, learning, by their example, to avoid that irreparable missortune into which they are fallen by their idleness?

O dear child, for the love you ought to have for your falvation, fly absolutely this vice, I beseech you, which is one of the greatest obstacles to it. In order to avoid it, remember to perform two things. The

first is, to apply yourself to some Two things to commendable exercise, which may be done against keep you employed the time of your idleness.

youth; and that you may perform it

faid above, in Part 2. Chap. 12. The second is, that you take care as much as you can never to be idle. Be ever employed either in your business, reading, or recreation. Let your recreations be accompanied with action either of body or mind. The devil seeks no better opportunity than to find you idle, that he may tempt and surprize you. For this reason practise diligently that excellent precept of St. Jerome, Be always doing something, that the devil may always find you employed. Hier. Epist. ad Rust.

CHAP. VIII.

The eighth obstacle, impurity.

WE are now come to the greatest, most powerful, and most universal of all the obstacles to the falvation of youth, viz. the fin of impurity. At the fight of which I cannot refrain from that expression of the prophet Jeremy, O that my head were full of water, and my eyes had a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the desolation of my people! For who can attentively confider the infinite number of young people which this fin keeps miferably enflaved, the havock it makes in their fouls, the innumerable offences it causes them to commit, the diforders it brings, the misfortunes into which it daily precipitates them, and chiefly the height of misery, viz. the ruin of their foul, and eternal damnation: who can confider these things, I say, without having his heart pierced with forrow, and without being moved with compassion, to advise them of the danger, and affift in withdrawing them from the misfortune into which they blindly run? For this reason, Theotime, I befeech you fix here your thoughts, and read attentively the following important reflections, that I may raise in your mind the horror and dread you ought to have of it, as of the greatest enemy to your falvation, and of the certain cause of your deftruction.

ARTICLE I.

That the sin of impurity is the greatest enemy to youth, and damns more than all other vices together.

I Would to God this proposition were rather a dream than truth, and that there were as much reason to question it, as to hold it for infallible: but

First, is it not a most deplorable thing to see the most innocent age of life so corrupted by that infamous sin, and the most flourishing portion of God's church dishonour'd in such a manner by that detestable vice? They are no sooner capable of reason, but this vice attacks them; it creeps into their minds, it possesses their desires, it seizes on their thoughts, it inflames their hearts with a love of dishonest pleasures, which daily encreasing with age, becomes so strong, that it is almost impossible to extinguish it.

This arises partly from the corruption of nature, which, as the facred scripture

of impurity. takes notice (Gen. viii. 3) is inclined to evil from its youth; partly from the temper and constitution of that age, which the tenderness of the body, and heat of blood, makes more susceptible of the impression of sensual pleasures, whence Aristotle calls it the vice of youth; and partly also from the malice of the devil, which affaults man in his youth on the weakest fide, making use of the frailty of the flesh to take possession of the spirit; and as S. Ferome (Epist. ad Demetriad.) judiciously observes, takes advantage of the heat of youth, by which he raises in their heart the fire of unchaste love, enkindling in them a more burning and cruel furnace than that which the king of Babylon caus'd to be prepared for the three innocent children of Israel, because that could but consume their bodies, but this scorches their souls, and prepares them for another fire which shall never be confumed.

O Theotime, they who attentively consider the corruption of manners which is found in youth, can never be fufficiently grieved. But that which deferves most to be lamented, is, that it frequently falls out, that there is nothing but this fin which is the cause of it, it being certain that there are many who are not fubject to any other confiderable vices; or if they be, they are the effects of this; and if they were freed from this, they would lead a pure and innocent life: whereas on the contrary, permitting themselves to be overcome by this unclean passion, they live a life full of iniquity, and heaping up daily new fins, and perverse habits, cast themselves into so deplorable a state, that they are often out of hopes of amendment and falvation. Wretched fin! must thou thus destroy men when they first enter the way of salvation? must thou forcibly take away from God so many beauteous fouls, which without thee would live in innocence, to facrifice them to pleasures, and by pleasures to the devil and everlafting flames? Curfed incontinence! who is there that can hate thee as thou defervest? To apprehend it more clearly, Theotime, read attentively that which follows, and judge of the cause by its effects.

ARTICLE II.

Of the sad effects of the sin of impurity.

THE author of the book De bono pudicitiæ, attributed to S. Cyprian, describes briefly a great number of the horrible effects of this sin: he says, that immodesty is a detestable passion, which spares neither souls nor
bodies, which renders men absolutely slaves of dishonest
love, slattering them at the beginning, that it might
more effectually destroy them. When it hath gotten possession of their hearts, it drains their substance together
with their modesty; it excites passions even to excess, it
destroys a good conscience, it is the mother of impenitence, the loss and ruin of the best part of age, that is,
of youth.

Omitting

Omitting the damage that fin causes to the body. honour and estate, I shall insist only upon the dreadful effects it produces in the foul, which I reduce to five or fix.

First effect, the destruction of the fear of God.

The first is, the destruction of the fear of God, which it works in the foul, and the ruin of all good inclinations. Experience shews this so plainly, that we need not feek any other

proof; we see many young people well educated, who have very good inclinations in their youth, an aversion from evil, a great affection to piety, the fear of God strongly imprinted in their fouls: now all these good qualities remain, if the fin of impurity doth not take possession of their hearts; but when that hath once enter'd into their mind, it entirely subverts them. It creeps in first by immodest thoughts, the thoughts produce the defire of wanton pleasures, the defire moves to unchaste actions, these fins repeated and multiply'd, ruin all the good inclinations; things now appear far otherwise than before, the fin now feems no more fo great, it becomes more familiar to them; and fuch an one who before had a great apprehension of one sole mortal fin, when he is once overcome by this brutal passion, is not difmay'd to commit them by hundreds and thousands. O God, what a change, what a subverfion is this of conscience!

a disrelish of virtue.

The second effect of this fin is a dif-Second effect, relish, and even an aversion to virtue, and to all pious and wholfome things. It is not to be conceived how those who are infected with this vice, have

an aversion to what regards their salvation. Prayer is tedious to them, the facraments contemptible, the word of God moves them not, reading of pious books is insupportable. This is but too manifest by experience, and no wonder, Theotime, he who

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is diffemper'd with a fever, takes no delight in the most delicious meats; on the contrary, they feem to him bitter, because his taste is depraved with some bitter quality. Thus he who is once seized by this burning fever of impurity, finds a wonderful loathing and diflike of all the most pious and wholfome things, by reason he hath his heart infected with carnal and impure affections, which permit him not to relish the sweetness of holy things. The natural man, fays St. Paul, that is, who follows the motions of the animal or fenfible part, taftes not the things which are of God. And those who live according to the flesh, relish only the things of the flesh. Rom. v.

The third effect is a blindness of mind, which this fin produces in the Third effect, foul, which hinders her from discerning good from bad, and judging of things as she ought. It is impossible

blindness of mind.

good

that a mind once posses'd by that passion, should not have its judgment perverted, and should not determine of the things of falvation quite contrary to truth: the attachment and inclination it hath to that fin, makes it not account it so great an evil (for we ordinarily judge according to our inclinations) and that it can withdraw itself when it pleases; it hinders it from seeing the wicked consequences and evils this vice brings after it. It takes away the remembrance of the divine judgments, and frequently endeavours to take God himfelf out of their minds, that they may fin more freely, as it is observed of those infamous old men, who attempted to corrupt the chastity of Susanna. They being inflamed with concupiscence, fays the facred scripture, lost their senses and judgment, and cast down their eyes, that they might not look towards heaven, and remember the just judgments of God. Dan. iii. This is the proper and peculiar effect of impurity; it blinds the mind, and makes it hoodwink itself, stifling all good thoughts, that it may fin with a greater liber.
ty, and with less remorse of conscience.

See the account St. Augustin gives of himself on this subject, in his second book of confessions, Chap. 2. which I have cited, Part 1. Chap. 13. Artic. 2.

From this blindness of mind springs fourth effect, pride, the fourth effect of this sin of impurity, which hindering the mind from knowing its own good makes

from knowing its own good, makes it despise all admonitions, result all remonstrances, and fcoff at the most wholfome counsels. So that as this fin renders young spirits soft and pliable to vice, it makes them inflexible, and obdurate to advice concerning their falvation. The wife man teaches you this truth, which experience also makes sufficiently appear. A wise man, says he, when he hears wise instructions, receives them with esteem, and advantages bimself by them; the lascivious bath no sooner heard them, but he is disgusted, and rejects them with contempt. Eccl. ii. 18. We need no other example of this truth, than that of St. Augustin, in the second book of his confessions, Chap. 3. where he deplores the insupportable pride, with which he contemned the discreet admonitions of his pious mother, to whom next to God he owed his falvation.

The fifth effect is an obdurateness of the will in wickedness. According to the measure that sin multiplies, in evil. the soul habituates herself, and be-

comes obdurate, so that nothing is able to soften her. It would be an incredible thing, if we did not daily see it most apparently, how those who are possessed with this sin, become stupid and obdurate. They are found insensible to all good motions, deaf to all the inspirations of grace; the menaces of divine justice and chastisements seem to them but a dream; witness the two sons-in-law of Lot, who looked upon the admonition he gave them as a fiction,

fiction to depart from the city of Sodom, which the night following should be destroyed, as in effect it was, and they together with it. The examples of those whom God hath so rigorously punished for this fin, touch them not at all; the misfortunes which they fee with their own eyes to befall others, make no impression on their minds; nothing is capable to move them, so horribly doth this brutal passion posfess them. Alas! (saith St. Augustin, 1. 2. conf. c. 2.) the chain of violent passions, wherewith this mortal flesh kept me captive, made such a noise about me, that I was deaf to all that might advertise me for my good. And this deafness was a punishment of the pride of my beart, contracted by the disorders of my life. O to what a deplorable state is a foul reduced by impurity!

After all these dreadful effects of the fin of immodesty, there remains Sixth effect, one which fills up the measure of all final impenithe former, and to which they all tend, tence.

viz. final impenitence, or death in mortal fin; which is the greatest and utmost of all misfortunes. It is, O Theotime, a most common and most ordinary effect of this detestable sin, which incessantly fills hell by a vast number of untimely deaths it brings on those who are plunged into this vice: fome dying furprized with fickness, which deprives them of the time or means to do penance; others by fome frightful accident; others departing in obdurateness, abandon'd by God at the hour of death, as they abandon'd him during their lives. Give ear to what the scripture says, and in the name of God imprint deeply in your heart those astonishing words of St. Peter: God, says that great apostle, knows bow to deliver the good from temptation, and reserve the wicked for the torments of fire, which his justice hath prepar'd for them. Hearken what follows, For ibose chiefly who walk after the slesh in the concupiscence of immodest pleasures. But what will befall them? Hearken.

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Hearken, Theotime; These like brute beasts shall perish, receiving the reward of their wickedness. O dear Theotime, is it possible that this oracle, pronounced by the Holy Ghost himself against immodesty, causes not an horror of that detestable sin? Read it attentively, and preserve it in your memory; and that it may be more strongly settled in your mind, add to it the following examples.

ARTICLE III.

Examples of the miserable death of those who were addicted to the sin of impurity.

THE facred scripture furnishes a great number of them; we have already mentioned some in Part I. chap. 6. See what we have there recounted of the two sons of the patriarch Juda, who were punished by God with sudden death for the sins they committed by detestable actions of impurity.

The miserable death of the two sons of the high priest Heli, and all the other missfortunes which God inflicted upon that family, were not only punishments for the irreverences and injustices they had committed in the temple, but also of their impurity, as it is observed in the first book of Kings, chap, ii. ver. 22.

Amnon the fon of David, found the chastisement of his incestual pleasures, in the dreadful death he received from the treacherous hands of his own brother

Absolon.

The rebellion of Absolon against his father, was not the sole cause for which God laid his revenging hand upon him; the uncleannesses he had committed, mentioned in the second book of Kings, chap. 16. with his other crimes, contributed thereunto.

What shall we say of Solomon, Theotime, who being the wifest of men, singularly beloved of God, and favoured by him with all desirable graces, but permit-

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ting himself to be missoftunately carried away with unchaste love, fell from that fin to the greatest of all crimes, that is, idolatry; wherein he continued so long, that it is not known whether he ever abandoned it, and hath left the world in doubt of his salvation? O dreadful example! O frightful effect of the sin of uncleanness!

If this fin hath been so fatal to particulars, it hath not spared multitudes, nor even the whole world.

That dreadful deluge, which drowned the whole earth fixteen hundred years after its creation, was the first effect of impurity, which had caused so prodigious a corruption in all human nature, that it provoked the divine wrath, even to destroy by an universal flood that same nature, the most excellent workman ship of his hands; to extinguish in those waters the slames of unchaste love, which had caused such an

universal conflagration.

The waters of the deluge were scarce dried up, when this detestable sin beginning again to rekindle its sirst stames, obliged the divine justice to send another frightful punishment upon those infamouscities of Soaom and Gomorrab; whose impurities being arrived at the greatest height, and crying to heaven for vengeance, God showered down visibly fire and brimstone, which reduced into ashes, not only the men and cities, but also all the neighbouring land, which is yet to this day an infectious unwholsome marsh, to which man dares not approach; that it might serve as an example to posterity, and teach the lewd, that the impure fire with which they permit themselves to be instamed, shall be punished with another fire, which shall burn always and never be consumed.

To these examples, which are taken out of the sacred scripture, and consequently most certain beyond dispute, I might add many others which histories abundantly furnish. I shall content myself with two,

which I have chose among others.

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The first is recounted by S. Gregory in his dialogues (lib. 4. cap. 38.) He faith, there was one in his time, named Chrysorius, a man of quality, and very rich; but as much abounding with vices as he was wealthy in riches; but above all extreamly addicted to immodest pleasures: God resolving to put a period to those fins he daily heaped one upon another, fends him a fevere fickness, of which he died, but in a very extraordinary manner. Approaching to his last moments, he suddenly perceived a multitude of evil spirits, who presented themselves unto him in hideous forms, and made a shew as if they would immediately carry him into hell. He began to tremble, look aghaft, and lamentably cry out for fuccour; he turns himself on every side to avoid the fight of those horrid shapes; but which way soever he moved, they were continually before his eyes. After many ftrugglings, feeling himfelf press'd, and violently seized by those wicked spirits, he began horribly to cry out, Truce till morning, Truce till morning; and shrieking thus, his foul was torn from his body, and he died miserably without obtaining the truce he required. 0 incontinence, mother of impenitence!

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If this example be terrible, that which follows is yet more frightful, and ought to move you more powerfully. It is related by John Gerson chancellor of Paris, who took it out of Thomas Catapratensis suffragan bishop of Cambray, who says he was an eye-

witness of it.

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He says, that being a young scholar, he had a companion in his studies, with whom he had contracted a very strict friendship, a person of quality, and endowed with all the virtues one could wish in a young man. Happy if he had preserved that treasure of innocence But it chanced by a missfortune too frequent to young persons, that he sell into wicked company, which kindled in his heart the sire of unchaste love; this in

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a short time confumed all his good inclinations, and cast him into the incredible disorder of a life full of fin and corruption. His irregularities were visible to all the world, yet he continued this kind of life, notwithstanding the admonitions of his friends: and this author fays, that he himself frequently exhorted him to return to the way from which he had departed. As he contemned all advice, God was resolved in his person to fhew an example to young people, who permit themfelves to be blindly carried away by this miserable fin, by a dreadful accident which I shall recount to you. Being afleep at midnight, he was feized with a terrible fright, and awaking he began to cry out in a dreadful manner. All the house rises, and every one comes to his affiftance. They ask what was his complaint, but could get no other answer from him than hideous outcries. They cause the priest to be sent for, who exhorted him to think upon God, and beg pardon of him for his fins, but in vain. The priest continuing to exhort him with many moving expressions and tears, he turns towards him, and looking upon him with ghaftly eyes, spake thus to him in a lamentable voice; Wo be to bim that seduced me, Wo be to bim that seduced me. It is vain to invoke the grace of God, I see bell open ready to receive me.

After these words, which redoubled the lamentations of all present, every one entreating him to recommend himself to God, he turns to the other fide, and continuing his clamours, miferably died in despair.

Ought not this example, Theotime, to make all those tremble, who are addicted to the fin of incontinency, and principally young persons, to whom it doth particularly appertain? to teach them how they ought to. preserve themselves from the company of those wretches, who corrupt the virtue of others. first compranions of the devil; and to do otherwise is to

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devour him who harboured it.

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Remedies against impurity; and first, that this sin must be resisted at the beginning.

A Fter I have discovered the malice of this sin, I must shew the remedies, and afford you means by which you may preserve yourself from so great an enemy to your salvation

The first which I shall prescribe, is to resist it betimes, and in its first assaults, before it hath gotten possession, and render d itself master of your heart.

This, Theotime, is the great remedy against this sin, and principally in youth, wherein it is so necessary, that for want of practising it, the greatest part of young men are unhappily engaged in this vice, and oftentimes so deeply, that they are never able to free themselves, or with very great trouble. It is the chief maxim in all distempers, whether of body or soul, to apply the remedies in the beginning.

Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur, Cùm mala per longas invaluêre moras.

The motions unto ill at first withstand, The Cure's too late, when vice has got command.

Now if the practice of this maxim be necessary both in corporal and spiritual distempers, it is particularly in this sin of impurity, which is easily encreased, and makes a wonderful progress in a small time.

For this reason the fathers have recommended it with much care, and more than any other: hearken,

Theotime, to what they shall deliver to you.

S. Cyprian (de. jejun.) fays, that we must resist the first temptations of the devil; and to do otherwise is to cherish a snake which will become a dragon, able to devour him who harboured it.

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S. Jerome (in c. 9. Eccles.) says, that the devil is a creeping ferpent; and as to keep a ferpent from entring into a hole, we hinder it from putting in its head, which being once entered, it cannot be stop'd from introducing its whole body: fo to hinder the devil from having admittance into our foul by fin, we must refift the first temptations; which if not withstood, he in fenfibly creeps into the heart, and makes himfelf mafter of it. we oblin from ow fleshe pet rebail of tuni-

St Gregory (in c. 25. 1 Kings) fays, that impurity is enkindled in the foul like fire in straw; and as if one doth not quickly and entirely extinguish the fire, it burns all that it encounters; so if the flame of incontinence be not carefully put out, it causes a fire in

the foul, which is often without remedy.

But give ear, Theotime, to the excellent counsel of St. Bernard (de inter. domo, c. 39.) with the reason he adds to it. Reject evil thoughts at the beginning, and they will fly from you: Lascivious thoughts which are not refifted, cause delight, delight draws on consent, consent produces the act, from the act springs a babit, from a habit necessity, and from necessity death. And as the viper is killed by the little ones she carries in her womb; so we receive death by our vicious thoughts, when we nourish them in our hearts.

The reason of this maxim, so much recommended by the faints, is, that it is easiest to refist the fin of impurity at the beginning, and very hard to furmount it when it is become inveterate and ftrengthen'd

by a long habit.

To comprehend better the greatness of this difficulty, see what we have said in the first part, of the difficulty of falvation after a vicious youth; for all that we have faid above, and the examples we have brought, are particularly to be understood of the fin of incontinence. Have a care it is Theorem, to it as it will as you

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time into a hole, we hinder it from putting in its head, That we must avoid the causes of impurity.

THE fecond means against the fin of immodesty is to avoid carefully the causes and occasions of it. A means absolutely necessary, it being certain, that to hinder the effect we must take away the cause: and he who puts himself in the occasion of evil, cannot avoid falling into it; because, according to the maxim, He who loveth danger, shall perish therein; Eccl. iii.

The first cause we must fly is idleness, which is the mother of all vices, as we have faid, but principally of this. It is that which opens the door to evil thoughts and immodest desires, which increase extreamly in an idle mind, and make it commit a vaft number of fins. It is the fink and receptacle of impure temptations, according to S. Bernard. Impurity fays he, bath never a greater advantage to surprize men, than in idleness; it burns more violently those it finds lulled asleep in vice. This truth is so obvious, that the pagans themselves have taught it.

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Otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus, Contemptaque jacent, & sine luce faces. Quæritur Ægyptus quare sit factus adulter? In promptu causa est, desidiosus erat.

If soth be banish'd, Cupid's bow's unbent, His torch extinct, and all his arrows spent. Wby did th' Egyptian adult'ry commit? The reason's clear, be first did sloth admit.

Have a care then, Theotime, to fly as much as you can this great cause of impurity; never be idle, but espeespecially when you are alone. See what we have faid of idleness in the former chapter, and of employment of time in Part 2. Chapo 14.00 of all these

The fecond cause of impurity is intemperance in eating and drinking, with which it is impossible to preserve chastity in whatsoever age it be, but principally in youth. The heat of blood which boils in that age, excites them very much to fenfual pleafures: but when it is affifted by exterior causes, as wine and good cheer, it blazes out. Hearken to what St. 7erome (de virg. serv.) fays, who speaks of it by his own experience. In his epiftle to Furia he fays, That mount Ætna, mount Vesuvius, and mount Olympus. which continually exhale fire and flames, did not burn with greater heat, than the marrow of young people. when they are inflam'd with wine and delicious meats. And in his epiftle to Eustochius; If I be capable, fays he, to give any counsel, if you will give credit to one that is experienced, I chiefly admonish and beseech that foul, which defires to be the spouse of Jesus Christ by preserving ber purity, to fly from wine as a mortal poi-Ion. These are the first arms the devil makes use of against youth. Wine and youth are a double inflammation to pleasure; why do we cast oil upon the fire? Why do we add more fuel to a body that is on fire? Behold, Theotime, the advice of this great faint, fo experienced in the conduct of fouls, and chiefly of youth. Apply all your endeavours to practife it exactly, if you would preferve your chastity; and to do it well, see Part 4. Chap. 23. of sobriety.

The third cause you ought carefully to avoid is wicked company, and all fort of diffolute discourses. or any ways tending to immodefly. It is not to be imagined how those things corrupt and destroy chafity in young people; for how many are there who never fell into this dreadful fin, till they had learned it, either by conversation with dissolute persons, or by the occasion of immodest discourses, which falling Give

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upon young minds, like a spark among straw, frequently inslames them with the fire of unchaste love. This cause is so common, and so pernicious to young people, that it cannot be sufficiently repeated, nor ever enough cried out to them. Fly wicked company, have a care of immodest discourses; or to say with the apostle, permit not yourself to be deceived therewith; for wicked discourses corrupt good manners. We have spoken of this cause before in Chap. 6. See what is said there, and chiefly the example I brought above in Art. 3. of that young man, who permitting himself to be seduced by wicked company, died in despair.

The fourth cause is familiar conversation with women, which is also extremely dangerous. It is there, Theotime, where the chastity of young persons is utterly ruined and destroy'd; and frequently after it has been preserved from other dangers, is there deplorably shipwreck'd. Impure love enters but too easily into young minds; but when it is affished by the presence of the object, it is instam'd beyond all imagination. For this reason the wise man gives us that important admonition, Continue not among st women, because from their conversation springs the loss and destruction of men, as moths which eat cloaths are bred in the garments. Eccl. xlii.

Now if the company of women be very prejudicial to young people, it becomes pernicious to them, and absolutely mortal, when it passes to a familiarity, to a desire to please and be belov'd, to overmuch freedom, to caresses and demonstrations of friendship, and such like privacies, too common amongst young persons, which St. Jerome calls very well The beginning of the approaching rain of chastity.

We must add to this cause immodest or too curious looks, either in or out of conversation. Love enters by the eyes; and sometimes a look, without any wicked design, draws after it a vast train of sins.

Give

Give ear to what the Holy Ghost teaches you by the mouth of the wise man: Look not on a virgin, lest you be scandalized in her beauty. Divert your eyes from a woman comelity adorned, and regard not curiously her graceful behaviour. Remember that women's beauty hath been faral to many, and hath enkindled unchaste slames in their hearts. Eccl. ix. What an excellent advice, Theotime! yet as much unknown, as it is important. Engrave this deeply in your memory, and have a care to govern well your sight, so that it be not too free on all occasions; and if it happen to glance upon dangerous objects, at least fix it not there, but withdraw it immediately. Observe the same rule in respect of all pictures, or immodest sigures, which are so many rocks for chastity to split on, and wherewith the world wretchedly abounds.

Add also to the former causes, kisses, which amongst young persons proceed often from sensuality and immodest affection, altho' it be sometimes conceal'd; or at least they excite it, and give a beginning to many sins and uncleannesses. For this reason a good author calls them very properly The bitings of the devil, and an earnest of sin. Euseb. Emiss. Hom.

de Quadr.

In fine, add also to these causes unchaste books, which you ought to fly as the plague of the soul, and the certain corruption of chastity. See what we have

faid, Part 2. Chap. 17.

These are the most ordinary causes of immodesty, which you ought carefully to avoid, if you desire to be freed from their pernicious effect. To say them usefully, and as you ought, Theotime, take notice of those you are subject to, and principally bear dominion in you; and having observed them, avoid them the most you can. For example, if it be idleness, apply all your care to overcome it by labour. If it be intemperance, be sober in your diet, and observe some abstinence by the advice of your ghostly father.

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Other particular remedies against impurity.

N flying the causes of impurity, you must likewife apply the remedies proper to cure and entirely repell it. Among others, I shall give you these four, which are jointly most necessary against this sin,

and very efficacious to preserve you from it.

The first is prayer. God is the author of purity; we must beg it of him, and the grace to refist the motions of that wretched concupiscence, which excites continual rebellions against the spirit. Demand it daily, Theotime, but not as St. Augustin (1, 28. con. 7.) begged it in his youth, defiring chaftity, yet was afraid to obtain it; but beg it ardently, and with an earnest longing to acquire it from God. O God, give me a clean beart, and renew in my bowels an upright spirit. If you demand it, you will obtain it; and remember to recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin,

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as we have faid above, Part 2. Chap. 19.

The fecond remedy is frequent confession to a difcreet ghostly father. This remedy is very necessary and efficacious against sins of impurity. Those who neglect it, never are cured; but such as make a right use of it, find great affiftance in freeing themselves from this cursed vice. We have spoken sufficiently above of it, in Part 2. Chap. 5 and 7. To shew the necessity of a wife guide against this sin, I only add, that St. Auftin deploring the disorders of his youth, which was involv'd in these crimes from the age of fixteen, laments that he had not then met with a difcreet hand, which might have rooted out his lascivious passions, which encreased in his soul without number or measure. Your confessor, Theotime, will do you this good office. And St. Ferome, after he had related the method by which a superior of a monaftery ARTI-

naftery had delivered a young man from violent temptations with which he was troubled, makes this reflection (ad Eustock.) If this young man had been alone. how could be have ever conquer'd these assaults? You fee by this, Theatime, how much the affiftance of a discreet person is necessary in overcoming the fin of tions, from which he found himfelf free sprugmi

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The third remedy is reading and meditating on pious things, which fill the mind with good thoughts, banish wicked ones, and fortify it in the time of temptations. Such are principally the thoughts of the grievoulnels of fin, of the justice of God, of his greatness, of his goodness, and other subjects, which you will find in the following chapter, Art. 3. the remembrance of death, of judgment, and of eternal punishment. Endeavour to fortify your mind with these reflections, by often reading these things seriously and

attentively in some book which treats of them.

The fourth is labour. This ferves to divert the mind from wicked thoughts, and to take away from the flesh the opportunity of rebelling against reason. You will find by experience, that this is an excellent remedy if you carefully apply it. St. Ferome recounts a very notable example of himself, (Ep. ad Ruft.) which may be of fervice to you. He faith, that being a young man, shut up in the solitude of the wilderness, whither he retir'd for the practice of virtue, he could not support the heats of his youth, which caused continual and violent temptations; and tho he repressed them with frequent fastings, his mind was ftill molested with impure thoughts: for the conquering of which he thought of a most efficacious means. He puts himself under the conduct of an Hebrew master, not disdaining even an alphabet, after imbibing the accuracy of Quintilian, the eloquence of Cicero, the noble and manly stile of Fronto, and the enchanting smoothness of Pliny. This study was attended with fo much difficulty, that he frequently

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left off, despairing to be able to attain to his defire; yet afterwards he renewed his pains, out of the great longing he had to learn. But the vexation of this trouble was recompended with the fruit he received from thence: for he obtained by this what he fought for by it, the deliverance from his vehement temptations, from which he found himself free, enjoying afterwards a sweet tranquillity. And I give God thanks fays he, that from this bitter feed of fludy I now gather most pleasing fruits. Behold, Theotime, what an effectual remedy labour is against the vice of impurity. note, of his goodness, and other fabiodis, which won

CHAP. IX.

Of temptations.

Treat here of temptations, because altho' one may be tempted with all forts of fins, yet the temptations to impurity are most frequent, chiefly with young persons, more difficult to encounter, and cause a great obstacle to their salvation. For this reason it it is highly necessary, that they should be well instructed how to refift and overcome them.

ARTICLE I.

What temptation is, and of the means to know whether one bath finned in a temptation.

What tempta-

Sinmay be confented to three

TATE call temptation a proposal of V fin made to the foul, to induce her to commit it, or rather a thought alluring to fin.

Now the foul may confent unto fin three ways. 1. By actually doing it. 2. In not performing, but defiring to perform it. 3. Neither performing not defiring, desiring, but taking pleasure or delight in thinking on the sin. Or to say otherwise, the will may consent unto sin by the action, by the desire, and by complacency or wilful delectation. From hence arise two things which ought to be well taken notice of.

1. That there is nothing but consent which causes the sin, and by consequence the thought alone of a sin, is not a sin, as long as the will doth not consent in one of those three ways; and altho' the thought should continue a long time, it is not a sin without consent; but on the contrary, it is meritorious to reject it.

2. To know whether one hath finned mortally in a temptation, it is not fufficient to confider whether one hath done a wicked action, or defired it; but one must take notice whether he hath wilfully taken pleasure in thinking on it: For the voluntary thinking with pleasure on a mortal fin, is a mortal fin. This must be well observed, because many deceive themselves therein, and believe they have not consented to a temptation, but when they either do or desired the evil to which they were tempted.

Nevertheless, one necessary thing is here to be obferved, viz. that there are two forts of delight in temptation; the one which precedes the consent, which is that one feels in the beginning of the temptation, and which draws the will to consent. The other which follows the consent, and it is that which the will takes in the thing proposed. This second delight is a fin, because voluntary; but not the first, which is not voluntary.

Wherefore, to see whether you have singled by the delectation of an evil thought, you must know whether you gave your consent. And because an action cannot be voluntary, except knowledge went before, to judge whether you consented to that delectation, you must take notice whether you perceived it, and how you behaved yourself after you resected on it, viz. whether you continued to entertain yourself

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therewith or no; for if you have continued, it is voluntary, and so you have sinned. And this sin was either mortal or venial; mortal, if you continued with a deliberate will, or by a voluntary and affected negligence. Venial, if that continuation was thro inadvertence, and without an entire consent, not desiring really to please yourself therein, and yet also not using necessary endeavours to reject it.

the district of the ARTICLE II.

That one cannot avoid being tempted, and that we must be prepared betimes to resist temptations.

Son, when you begin to apply yourself to the service of God, be firm in justice and in the fear of God, and prepare your soul for temptation; Eccl. ii. It is the chief advice which the wise man gives, and which you ought often to have before your eyes. It is a certain maxim, that we cannot live here without temptations. This life is a perpetual combat, according to that of the scripture, which affirms, that man's life is a warfare upon earth; Job. vii. We have enemies which assault us on every side, within and without, visible and invisible. The world and exterior things furnish us with continual occasion of sin. The disorder of concupiscence perpetually rebells against the spirit. The devil, who watches night and day for our destruction, employs all his forces to make us fall into it.

Now if this common enemy conspires generally the ruin of all men, it is certain he applies most vigorously the violence of his temptations against those, who withdraw themselves from him to serve their creator, according to the observation of the fathers, St. Leo, St. Greg. &c. And, among those, he attacks most strongly young people, whom he endeavours with all his force to divert from the service of God,

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that he might fecure himself betimes of their ruin, as

we have shew'd, Part I. Chap. 14.

This being fo, Theotime, you must We must not not wonder when you feel frequent beimpatient in temptations, nor lose patience in suftemptations.

fering them; it is a thing you cannot

avoid. Temptations are often the effects of vicious habits contracted by former fins; fometimes they fpring from the occasions into which you voluntarily by your own fault cast yourself. And in these two cases you have no reason to complain but of yourfelf. Without these two causes, your age will also furnish you sufficiently: the enemy will not let you rest, or if he do, it is to surprise you more easily. You must therefore dispose yourself couragiously for the combat, and prepare the necessary arms to defend yourfelf in that war. Have a good courag then, dear child, you will not be alone in this combat; God will be there with you, to affift you to gain the victory, and, with the victory, great advantages for your falvation.

For these temptations serve, 1. To keep you in humility, and in the fear Three great of falling into fin, and always to benefits from make you fland upon your guard by temptations.

prayer, and other necessary means. 2.

To confirm you more and more in virtue, and daily increase you therein: for every refistance you make to temptation, is a renewing and confirmation of the firm resolution you have made not to offend God any more upon any account whatfoever, and it merits new grace from God to relift temptations for the future. 3. These temptations serve to secure your falvation, and increase your glory in heaven.

ARTICLE III.

Considerations to fortify the mind in temptations.

Emptation being a thought alluring unto fin, it is certain the first remedy which must be applied,

is to furnish the mind with contrary thoughts, which may divert it from the sin to which it is sollicited. See here some of the most powerful, which will be able to raise a horror of sin in you, if you consider them attentively. Wherefore when you shall be tempted, and principally if the temptation be strong and obstinate, make one or more of these reslections.

1. What are you going to do? You are going by one fole action, and in a moment, to lose the grace of God, to make yourself his enemy, unworthy of all his favours, the object of his hatred and indignation: you are going to renounce heaven, to lose all the good you have ever done, to render yourself a flave of the devil, and subject to eternal damnation. O God! what a loss is this! Weigh well all these things one after another.

2. But for what are you about to incur all this damage? for the miserable pleasure of a wicked thought, of an unchaste desire, of an action dishonest, brutish, and unworthy of man: a pleasure which will last but a moment, and being past, leaves nothing behind it but forrow and vexation, and remorse of conscience, which will always persecute you. Do you act like a man when you make such a choice?

The greatness of him offend.

3. Consider the dignity of him you are about to offend: you offend God infinite in power, in greatness, in majesty, in holiness. God, whom all creatures adore, in whose presence the an-

gels tremble: you are going to revolt from him, to cast off the yoke of his obedience, and say rebel like, I will not serve. You wretched man, despicable creature! You go to sly in the sace of your creator. O God, what an indignity is this! Do you understand, Theotime, that the injury sin does to God is so great, that it were better the whole world were subverted, than one sole sin committed?

4. If you could conceal your fin from God, and not offend him in his presence, you were less blameable; but you offend him before his face, knowing well that he fees you, confiders you, and regards with horfor the fin you are about to commit. What greater affront can you offer him than this? You would blush for shame, if you should think yourself seen by a man in this action, and are you in no confusion to be feen by God himself? and to do that in his adora-ble presence, which you would be ashamed to do in the presence of the most miserable of all men? Can you shew a greater contempt of God than this? O how blind are you! If you will offend God, seek at least a place where he is not; and if you cannot find it, be ashamed to let that holy and adorable eye fee you in your fin: and be afraid to commit a crime before the face of him who is at the same time both witness and judge, and who could strike you dead the moment you have accomplished it.

Turn your eyes upon the goodness of him you are going to offend. Who is it that you assault? Nothing less than your celestial father, who hath made you what you are, who hath given you all that you possess, who preserves you incessantly, and without whose affistance you could not move a hand. You breathe only by the air he gives you; and if he should abandon you but one moment, you would fall presently into nothing. Look upon yourfelf from head to foot, and you will find nothing but what comes from God: yet you in the midst of all these favours and benefits dare criminally offend him, despising the goodness of fo liberal a God, the love of fo kind a father, making use of his own bleffings against him, and in offending him. Go, you ungrateful and degenerate child, more cruel than beafts! Tigers have a love for him that feeds them, and you fear not to offend the author of all the good you have.

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Come

Come now to that incomprehensible abyss of the divine bounty, to the mafter-piece of his love, the paffion of his Son Jesus Christ. It is here, Theotime, it is here where you will find wherewith entirely to break the attempts of the most violent temptations. more than any where elfe. Cast your eyes upon your Saviour nailed upon the crofs, cover'd with wounds, overwhelm'd with grief, dying for your falvation. Fix there your fight and thoughts, confider, meditate attentively all that he fuffer'd; remember that it was for you, and for the fins you have committed, that he suffer'd in such a manner, and fee whether you have a heart hard and cruel enough to refolve to offend again a God dying for your falvation, and crucify him a-new by mortal fin. How! dear child, if the fight of a God crucified for your fins is not able to hinder you from offending him, will not the blood he shed for your salvation soften your heart? Will not all the pains he endur'd for you have force to make you love him? All the wounds he received are fo many mouths and voices, crying out, A borror of sin, a love of Jesus; and can you behold them without either having a horror for fin, which crucified Christ Jesus, or a love for Jesus Christ crucified for your fins? O Jesus, permit it not, but cause by thy goodness, that the sole thought of thy death so touch our hearts in temptation, that it raise in us a horror of fin, and make us resolve to chuse rather to die than offend him again, who died for the love of us.

to alamboo and R T I C L E IV.

How we must behave ourselves in temptations.

ROM the moment that you perceive yourself assaulted with a temptation entering your mind, be careful readily to reject it without staying therein ever so little; it is the chief remedy given by the holy

holy fathers, and particularly by St. Jerome, Ep. ad

Eustochium 22.

Now that you may thus stifle temptations in their birth, remember to perform two things. 1. Raise your mind to God, and protest unto him that you renounce the temptation with all your heart, and will not confent unto it: beg of him the affistance of his grace to refift it, often making the fign of the cross on your heart, to drive from thence the enemy of your falvation. It is incredible, Theotime, how powerful prayer is in the moment of temptation, efrecially when joined with a perfect confidence in the death of our Lord. 2. After that elevation of your mind, divert yourself by applying your thoughts to perform fomething, as work, reading, talking, recreation, or other like thing, which may keep your mind employed, and you will find by experience that the temptation oftentimes without trouble will vanish,

If it continue to return, persevere in employing these two means; pray with more fervour, protest that you will not confent, proceed in entertaining your mind with fomething else. If you be all alone, it will be good to ftir up yourfelf by some exterior action of devotion, as to raise your eyes or hands towards heaven, smite your breast, cast yourself on your knees to demand of God grace to refift. See the example of St. Jerome, Art. 8. It would also do very well to terrify yourself with the remembrance of death, with the thoughts of God's judgments and of eternal damnation, according to that great advice of the wife man, Remember the last things, and you shall never

sin. Eccl. vii. 40.

Have a care not to stop your thoughts to consider the temptation An important itself, but apply your mind to think advice. upon the motives which may deter you. And for this effect, principally when the temptation continues a long time, endeavour to reflect up-

on one or more of the former considerations, and after you have weighed them well, make a final resolution never to consent thereunto, although it should return a thousand times.

Another advice to make use of the temptation, as a motive to some virtuous action.

Not to content yourself with rejecting a temptation, but to take an occasion from thence to perform some act of piety, is a most effectual remedy against it. For example, on the day you have been tempted, apply yourself more to prayer than ordinarily, read some pious book, mortify yourself, give some alms to the poor; and

above all in the time of temptation exercise some act of virtue, as detesting of sin, loving of God with all your heart, protesting you will never offend him. By this means you will defeat your enemy with his own arms; and he seeing that, instead of moving you to sin by his temptations, he gives you occasion to practise virtue, will desist from tempting you, fearing to advance your salvation by the same means he employed to destroy you.

Third advice, to distrust one's own strength. But above all, Theotime, be careful when you resist a temptation, not to confide in your own strength; but to expect all from the grace of God. This is the best means of subduing temptations, humbly acknowledging

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that you can do nothing of yourself without the succour of divine grace. By how much more you disside in your own strength, putting your considence only in God, by so much more easily will you surmount them. See, says S. Augustin (Serm. 4. de Verb. Apost.) little David combating Goliab. He was a youth without force, without arms, who encountred a giant arm'd cap-a-pe, from head to foot; but because he put all his considence in God, he gained the victory. Thou comest to me (said David to Goliab) with buckler and

and lance, and I come to thee in the name of the allpowerful God; and in that confidence he overthrew him at the first stroke. Thus must you encounter with the enemy of your falvation. He (favs St. Augustin) who trusts in his own forces, is overcome before be fights.

Now the principal means to obtain many helps from God in temptation is prayer, and the frequentation of the facraments, confession and communion, which have a wonderful force against temptations, and without which it is morally impossible to resist any long time. See all we have faid in Part 2. Chap. 5, and 7. The resty terminal problem of the state of the sta

which was made but a threshow, does commission for the ARTICLE V.

Of some artifices by which the devil deceives men in temptations, and principally young men.

A LL the force of the devil in temptations con-A fifts only in craft and deceit; wherefore the best means to resist him is to know the tricks he commonly employs. There are many, but I shall only take notice of three amongst the rest, by which he maliciously imposes upon men, and principally young persons.

The first is, that by which he hinders them from regarding or knowing First artifice.

the evil which is in the fin they are going to commit; and on the contrary, he represents to their imagination very livelily, on one fide the sweetness of the delight of sin, which he always makes them think far greater than it is, and on the other the trouble and difficulty to refift it, and abstain from it, which makes them believe it unfurmountable.

Who doth not fee how great the The falfity of illusion is in all these three things? this artifice. For the evil which is in fin is the

chiefest

chiefest of all evils imaginable, as we have said above, Art. 3. The delight of sin is but for a moment, and is followed by vexation, sadness, and despair. The trouble of resistance continues not long, and a sweet and pleasing consolation follows it; it merits heaven, and frequently the deliverance from many other temptations.

O dear Theotime, permit not your-The remedy. felf to be thus abused by the enemy of your salvation: when he shall propose a temptation to you, consider the evil you are going to do, which is a mortal sin, the greatest of all evils. Think not on the pleasure that is offered, which will pass like a shadow, but upon the forrow and displeasure it brings after it. Regard not the pain and difficulty of resistance, but the joy and consolation you will receive from your victory. If you act thus, you will find that the temptation will soon vanish.

The fecond deceit by which the Second artifice. devil feduces young people, is to pro-

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pose, during the temptation, the easiness of pardon, and persuade them that they will do penance, and confess themselves of it. Alas, Theotime, how frequently doth it fall out, and too often, that in the combat of temptation, the conscience refifting on her fide by the good motions God gives her, this misfortunate thought comes into the mind, I will confess myself of it, I will do penance for it: and with this thought one miserably resolves to commit this fin. What! if you imagined that God prefently after the fin would cast you into the pit of hell, you would not offend him; and because you hope he will pardon you, you do not scruple to displease him. O what impiety is this! O wickedness! Will you be impious because God is good? Do you offend him because he will pardon you? O Theotime, if ever this thought come into your mind, reject it as

suasion.

a blasphemy, and as a wile of the devil, by which he would cast you into the abyss of fines your year tart

The third deceit of the devil to- Third artifice.

wards young persons, is, that after he beat assign hath made them fometimes yield to his temptations by the former artifices, he puts into their minds this false and wicked opinion, that it is impossible to refist temptations, and to abstain from sin; to the end that, being possessed with this persuasion, The falleness they may make no endeavours to reof this per-

fift them, and give themselves over to

evil without any restraint.

Deteftable persuasion! diabolical invention! which is so much more deplorable, as being most false and pernicious, it is nevertheless most common amongst young people. Infensible creatures! what is it that dazzles you thus, fo that you cannot fee the truth more clear than day? Do you not fee how injurious this thought is to the mercy of your Saviour, who hath fhed his blood to merit for you grace to refift in these occasions, and who stretches out his arms to fuccour you? This perfuation comes not from him who calls you to him to fave you, but from the devil, who feeks to destroy you without recovery.

O dear child, permit not yourself to be seduced by this execrable The remedies.

thought, but in the midst of the most and med W violent temptations call to mind the mercy of your Saviour, who never abandons those who hope in him. Tribulations, fays the wife man, have environ'd me on every fide, and there was no one that would affift me. I called to mind thy mercy, O God, knowing that thou succourest those who trust in thee, and thou hast deliver'd me from my destruction; Eccl. v. again, notificat

These are the three most ordinary artifices the devil makes use of against young persons in temptations, and all three are purfued in order. For first, he hides from them the evil, and makes them believe it is not fo great as in reality it is. Next, he persuades them that they may easily free themselves from it. And in fine, when he hath them deeply engaged, he makes the difficulty of abstaining prodigious in appearance, that they may not attempt to deliver themselves from it. Resect well upon these three artifices, and have a care not to be deluded by them.

ARTICLE VI.

Of two considerable faults usual with young persons in temptations.

Besides the fault they commit, who permit themselves to be deceived by the three former artisfices, they fall into two others much more dangerous, and which you must observe, that you may carefully avoid them.

The first is, that when they see themFirst fault. selves attacked by frequent temptations,
they presently become impatient, and after having resisted a while, lose courage, and yield to
the enemy, believing that they cannot resist him any
longer. This error is very common among young people, and it gives a great advantage to the enemy of
their salvation over them.

When the city of Betbulia in Juda was besieged by Holosernes, the principal people of the town, with all the commonalty, betook themselves to their prayers, to obtain of God their deliverance; and seeing God did not hear them so soon as they expected, they resolved to deliver themselves, if succour did not come in five days. The couragious Judith hearing of this resolution, disapproved it much, and sharply reprehended them, saying, Who are you that thus tempt our Lord? Such speech will not obtain his mercy, but provoke his sury. What! have you limited a time for the mercy of God, and appointed a day to succour you?

We must not proceed in this manner. Let us do penance, let us demand pardon with many tears, and with all

bumility expect bis comfort ; Judith viii.

I say the same to you, dear Theotime, when you lose patience in temptations, and despairing to be able to resist them, you take a resolution at length to deliver yourself over to your enemy, you offer a great injury to God; for this is to distrust his grace, and dispose of it as you please: this is not the means to obtain it, but on the contrary, by this diffidence you render yourself more unworthy of his mercy, are at a greater distance from his grace, and expose yourfelf to more grievous temptations, and to fall into fin without refisfance. No, no, we must not act thus, we must have patience in temptations, and humbly expect the divine grace, which will never fail you, except you be wanting to it first. If you persevere couragiously to refist, he will either deliver you from the temptations, or give you grace to overcome them. Remember, that the greatest saints have been tempted likeyou, and much more: call to mind the apostleS. Paul, who having demanded of God to be delivered from great temptations, received this answer from him, My grace is sufficient for thee, for virtue is perfetted in weakness, 2 Cor. xxi.

The fecond fault young perfons com- Second fault.

mit in temptations, is, that when they

once chance to yield unto the enemy, they lose courage, lay down their arms, and permit themselves to be overcome by all other temptations, without any resistance. O God! what a strange blindness is this, for being once conquered, to fubmit entirely to the enemy; after having received some wounds, to be content to receive many more; after having lost the grace of God, to continue to provoke more and more his fury, instead of readily appeasing it by penance! Can any thing be more opposite to reason and common sense?

The Israelites being assembled to fight against the tribe of Benjamin, to revenge a most enormous crime committed by some of that tribe, altho' they were far more numerous, they were defeated in the first and fecond battle. These two overthrows highly astonish'd them, yet nevertheless they lost not courage; they came before the tabernacle of God, and there they fet themselves to weep, to fast, to make their supplications, and offer sacrifices to appeale the divine anger. This being done, they took their arms again, and went couragiously to the combat, where they gained the victory, and entirely defeated their enemies Jud. xx.

This, Theotime, is exactly what you must do in the combat of temptations; you must not be discouraged for being once conquered, but chearfully rife again: you must have recourse to God, lament your misery, beg pardon of him, appeale his fury, implore the affistance of his Grace, and after having done penance for your fins, reassume your arms in the name of God, and give battle more couragiously than before. The forrow for being vanquished must excite you to refift your enemy more resolutely, and your defeat make you stand better upon your guard for the su-ture. Do so then, dear Theotime, and be punctual in following this advice, if you should be so unhappy as to fall into fin.

vacy lofe con-ARTICLE VII.

What is to be done after the temptation is conquered.

Two faults WE ordinarily commit two faults after the tem- after we are delivered from a ptation is o- temptation. The first is, we give not vercome. thanks to God for the victory we have gained by the affiftance of his grace. The

fecond, we make no preparation to refift future temptations. These two defects are the cause why we easily

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E fi fall into other temptations, and are at length overcome by them. The first, because God would have us acknowledge his favours, and particularly great ones, fuch as a victory over temptation. The second, because he who doth not stand upon his guard, is soon furprifed by his enemy.

1. It is therefore most important, First remedy.

Theotime, when you have furmounted a

temptation, that you take care to give God thanks for it, either immediately after the temptation, or at least at the end of the day in your evening prayers. Renhim thanks with all your heart for this victory, acknowledge that it comes from him alone, and not from you, and that without him you had a thousand times been vanquished.

2. Prepare yourself to refift tempta- Second remedy.

tions for the future. 1. Making a firm protestation to God, to resist them with all your power. 2. Humbly demanding the continuation of his affiftance. 3. Refolving to make use of such and

fuch means which you know have fucceeded.

If it chance that you remain some time without temptation, confide not too much in this peace and tranquillity: for it frequently happens, as S. Gregory (3 Mor. 16.) observes, that the enemy permits those whom he hath much tempted, to continue some time in quiet, that he may furprise them more easily, when they think least of him, and that he make them fall into fin by a fudden and violent temptation. For this reason stand always upon your guard, demanding daily of God grace to refift the affaults of the enemy. Be careful to remove quickly from your mind all the first thoughts that may move you to fin, as we have faid before, Art. IV.

ARTICLE VIII.

A remarkable example to teach us how we must encounter temptations.

A N ancient author says very well, that the way to learn by precept is very long, but that by example is much shorter and most efficacious. Wherefore it will be much to the purpose, to set here before your eyes some of those who have couragiously resisted temptations, that their example may stir up your courage, and teach you how to manage the arms

with which they have happily overcome.

Amongst many others I might bring, I have chosen out the great St. Jerome, whom I would propose
to you for a model and example. He was young, as
you are, at the time of these temptations; he was more
tempted than ever you will be, and perhaps of all the
servants of God, his youth was most tried by temptations. He encounter'd them with an admirable
perseverance, from whence he reap'd most glorious
victories. I shall give you his own relation of it:
read it attentively, and mark well all the circumstances.

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This faint being yet young, after he had spent some time in a worldly life, was mov'd with a desire to serve God, and labour for his salvation by a true conversion. He takes a resolution to leave the world, and to retire into some wilderness to do penance, and apply himself entirely to virtue. He went first to ferusalem, to visit the holy places, and from thence he retir'd into the desert.

He continued in that place four years, during which, notwithstanding the incredible austerities he underwent, he was assaulted with continual temptations, and so great, that they move compassion in those

those who read them. Rehold what he says, writing

to his devout Eustochius, Epist. 22.

O bow often in this vast solitude, where the continual scorching beat of the sun makes the habitation horrible and insupportable, did the delights of the city of Rome present themselves to my imagination! The sorrow and bitterness with which my soul was filled, made me seek the most retir'd places to lament for my fins. My body now all bideous, was cover'd with a bair-fhirt; I ceased not to weep, and daily figh; I had no other bed than the ground, nor other nourishment than that of the monks of the desert, who drank nothing but water, nor eat any thing but raw berbs, even in their distempers. In this state, and in this prison, to which I had condemn'd myself to avoid that of hell, altho' I had no other company but that of scorpions and savage beasts, I found myself often in imagination with the Roman dames. Fasting bad made my visage pale and disfigur'd, yet my mind did not cease to be inflam'd with unchaste desires. In a languishing body, and a flesh mortified, so that it seem'd almost dead before me, I burnt with the flames of immodest pleasures.

See the temptations which this saint endur'd, and the rude assaults he sustain'd; but consider how this

generous champion behaved himfelf.

In this deplorable state, deprived of all human succour, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus Christ; I water'd them with my tears as the Magdalen, I tamed the rebellions of my flesh with whole weeks of abstinence: and amongst other things I remember, that sometimes I passed whole nights and days crying out for succour, and imploring the assistance of God in these combats, and desisted not from praying and smiting my breast, till the tempest was past, and God by his grace had brought repose and tranquility.

What an example, Theotime, is this, to teach you how to encounter with temptations! But hearken yet

to what follows.

And as God himself is my witness (goes on the faint) after many tears, after baving prayed a long time with eyes raised to beaven, I felt so great a consolation, that sometimes I seemed to be placed amongst the quires of angels, and fing with incredible joy those excellent words of the spouse in the Canticles, I will run, O God, I will run now after thee in the odour of thy perfumes, and in the sweetness of thy consolations. Ibid.

O what an example, Theotime, is this, to animate you to encounter the temptations of youth! O how admirable and instructive is this for you, and all those of your age! For among others it teaches you three

Ierome.

things of great importance. 1. That Three things you ought not to be aftonish'd to see to be learnt yourself tempted, since this holy saint from faint in his youth, notwithstanding all his mortifications, and removed from all occasions of fin, suffered a long time so

great temptations. 2. It will teach you how to encounter with temptations, viz. by mortifications, and above all by humble, fervent, and persevering prayer. And in the third place, you there learn the greatness of the joy God gives to those who have refisted temptations with much courage and perseverance.

O my dear child! fet this excellent example often before your eyes. When Practice. you shall be tempted, represent unto

yourself St. Jerome in the defert, encountering his temptations with tears, with prayers, with mortification, casting himself at the feet of Jesus Christ, and imploring his affiftance. Imitate him, let your chamber be a folitude, to find there the divine fuccour against temptations; and be assured, that after your prayer God will fend you tranquillity, and make you feel an incredible joy and confolation, which will ammate you anew to refift temptations, and ferve your Saviour more faithfully than ever.

CHAP.

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Obstacles peculiar to rich young persons.

THE obstacles we have spoken of hitherto, are common to all young people of whatsoever quality or condition. But because among the several conditions, there are some which bring with them particular obstacles, it is proper to treat briefly of them. These conditions are chiefly riches, nobility, and benefices.

As for riches, there is no question but they are a particular obstacle to salvation, since the Son of God himself assures us as much, saying, they choke the seed of the word of God in souls, and hinder it from taking root, and bringing forth fruit; which is true, not only in men already advanced in age, in whom covetousness, and the love of riches chiefly prevail, but also in young men, to whom the possession of riches is

frequently a hindrance of falvation.

This is known sufficiently by experience, which manifests, that rich young people are ordinarily more vicious than others. We see them addicted to pleasure, flothful, and enemies to labour, their minds always taken up with vanity, aspiring after greatness, fortune, and the riches of the world, proud, prefumptuous, despising others, untractable, and resisting the most wholfome instruction and advice, subject to a vast number of fins, oftentimes malicious and ingenious to effect it. And on the contrary, we see young persons of a mean condition or small fortune, live in the fear of God, defirous to procure their falvation, and advancement in virtue, addicted to labour, feeking good instructions, and receiving them with joy and much fruit, flying from fin, or recovering instantly if they chance to fall into it. And by this means they heap the bleffings of God upon themselves; for God

is pleased to favour the humble, and those who fear him, as on the contrary he rejects the proud, and those who trust in their own power, and glory in the

multitude of their riches. Pfal. xlviii.

I say this, Theotime, to admonish you, that if God hath order'd you to be born rich, you take care that your riches serve not for your damnation, as they do daily to many like you; the multitude whereof makes but too evident that truth deliver'd by the mouth of fesus Christ, who says, How difficult is it for the rich to be saved! Luke xviii. Wherefore perform three things.

your riches may much prejudice your falvation, if you have not a great care to preferve yourfelf from the obstacles they cause, and employ them usefully.

2. You must endeavour to understand what these obstacles are, that you may diligently avoid them. There are many, but those which are most particular are these, viz. pride, untractableness, idleness, love of pleasures, vicious company, and slatteries of

men; have a care of all these things.

Be humble in your riches, remembring what St. Austin fays (Ser. 5. de ver. Domini) that they breed arrogance; that as every fort of fruit has its particular worm; riches engender pride and prefumption. In order to humble this pride, confider on the one fide the danger they daily put you in of offending God, and ruining yourfelf; and on the other fide, the exact account you must render to God of the good use you have made of them. Wherefore do you glory in the riches you possess, which God can take away in a moment? and with which, as the wife man fays (Prov. xvii.) you cannot obtain true riches, that is, wisdom and virtue; which if you possess them not, you, with all your goods, are but like a horse righly accoutered, which with all his ornaments is but a beast without reason.

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Render yourself docile and tractable; be ready to learn, and willing to be reprehended; and be per-suaded, that by how much you are nobler and richer, by so much ought you to be better instructed, because you are so much more exposed, and your faults are of a greater consequence than others.

Fly idleness, so natural to the rich. Remember that the rich, as the scripture says, are not in trouble as other men, and not subject to the afflictions of others. Psal. lxxii. St. Bernard (Serm. ad Past.) adds, that there is great reason to fear, lest they should be afflict-

ed with the devils.

Preserve yourself carefully from dainties, which are the baits of pleasures. Remember that chastity is in the midst of dangers and precipices, when surrounded with riches, where daintiness of nourishment, of garments, of lying, and a thousand other occasions, expose it to a continual hazard of ruin, if not resisted with incredible diligence. Wo be to the rich (says the prophet, Amos vi.) who sleep in curious beds, who seek pleasure in their delicious couches, who feast, taking all delight, whilst the poor is in misery, without shewing any compassion towards him. And the Son of God says, Wo be to the rich, because they have their consolation in this world. Luke vi.

Withdraw yourself from wicked company, which your riches will easily attract, as a prey invites birds.

See what we have faid above, Chap. VI.

Permit not yourfelf to be deceived by flattery, which always accompanies the rich, and which ordinarily perverts their mind, and principally young perfons, according to St. Jerome, Epist. ad Celan. Give not credit to any thing they shall say in your commendation; for either they commend you for things that deserve not praise, as your condition, your wealth, your good behaviour, or other like things; or else for things you have not, as science, wisdom, virtue; or if you have them, they come not from you.

To value yourself on the first, is vanity; on the second, folly; on the third, injustice: for you appropriate to yourself a glory due only to God.

3. There remains the third thing required for preventing the danger to which riches will expose your falvation, that is, to make good use of them. This is no other than that which St. Paul order'd Timothy to prescribe to the rich; consider what he says, and comprehend it well. 'Command the rich of the world, that they be not bigh-minded, that they put not their confidence in uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy; that they apply themselves to virtue, and be rich in good works; that they give alms freely, and communicate their goods to those that want; that they lay up store for the time to come, and to obtain eternal life. Tim. vi. This, Theotime, is the use of riches, which the Holy Ghost prescribes to the wealthy, and which you ought exactly to practife, if you will not be deftroyed by your possessions. After all, keep in your mind that great truth St. Cyprian teaches you, That a great patrimony is a temptation, if the revenue one possesses be not employed in pious uses; and by how much any one abounds in wealth, by so much more ought he to make use of it to redeem bis sins, and not to multiply them. St. Cyp. lib. de hab. Virg.

CHAP. XI.

Obstacles peculiar to gentry.

To put gentility among the obstacles to virtue, were to offer an injury to it; but we shall do no wrong to truth, if we say that the ill conduct of persons of rank is a great impediment to their salvation, and frequently the cause of their ruin and damnation.

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To see this truth, and clearly understand, that there is no state generally more corrupt, nor vicious, than that of people of distinction, we need only reslect a

little on the life they lead.

We fee prodigious pride reign in them, which makes them contemn all the world, and efteem all others infinitely below them. Ambition, and a defire of growing great, perpetually possesses them. They are extravagantly addicted to pleasures, lovers of delight, bold and shameless in publishing their sins, and glorying in them, envious in the highest degree, tied to their interest, affecting none but themselves, unjust, violent, harsh, and often cruel towards others, especially their inferiors, impatient and cholerick, given to fwearing and blasphemies, revengeful even to excess, not being able to fuffer or dissemble the least injury, which frequently is grounded only in their imagination, and even make open profession never to endure or diffemble any. O God, what a life is this for men who make profession of the Christian religion!

And that which completes the miffortune of this condition is, that detestable passion for duels, with which they are so continually possess that

The detestable passion for duels.

they are so continually possess, that there is scarce a moment in their life, wherein they have not a resolution to expose themselves to sight upon the first injury, or at least at the first challenge; a resolution which keeps them in continual mortal sin, and hinders them from ever being in the grace of God. Not to mention the contempt of religion, sensuality and impiety, which usually reign in that state, and especially in these our days, where there are found so many who say unto God, as the impious say in the scripture, Depart from us, we will not have the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the all-powerful, who says that we must serve him? What does it prosit us to pray unto him? Job.xxi.

Is not this a thing much to be deplored, to fee in the midst of Christianity, the fairest part of the Christian world most corrupted? And that a distinction, which is given as a recompence of virtue, and to excite others thereto, should become the source of vice, and the fountain of the corruption in those who posfess it? so that it is a mark of reprobation to many; it were more defireable for the greatest part of them never to have been born. For what advantage is it to be great before men, and contemptible in the fight of God? (Euseb. Emiss. Hom. 3. de Pascate.) To be honoured by men, and hated by God? To command others, and to be a flave to vice, and his own passions? And in a word, to be happy in this world, and damned for ever, being of the number of those who eternally cry out, What did our pride profit us? What advantage bath the pomp of riches brought to us? All those things are passed away like a shadow. Wherefore have we erred from the way of truth? Wisd. v.

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O my dear Theotime, if you be a person of distinction, I beseech you to reslect seriously on yourself, and on the danger to which your rank exposes your salvation. Distrust your state, and be assaid less it ruin you. By how much more you are raised in condition, by so much more you are obliged to be virtuous, and are in greater hazard of destruction. Labour earnessly for your salvation, and use all possible diligence that your rank be not a cause of your damnation, as it is to many. For this effect, practise the following advices.

First advice.

I. Understand perfectly what true gentility is. Gentility is inseparable from virtue, it takes its origin from thence, and is only preserved by it. It hath been bestowed upon your ancestors, in recompence of their worthy actions; if you imitate them in their virtue, you will merit the

the title of Gentleman; if you imitate them not, you have but a false and imaginary gentility.

2. Know, that besides this distincti- Second advice.

on instituted by men, there is a divine

one infinitely superiour, which is that acquired by grace. For if gentility consists in being born of illustrious parents, and of those that are considerable in the world, what will it be to be made the child of God, coheir of Jesus Christ, designed for the possession of the kingdom of heaven? This, Theotime, is the great, the prime and true gentility; if you possess this, you are really distinguished; and if you have it not, how noble soever you may be before men, you are most infamous and abominable in the fight of God.

3. This being fo, permit not yourfelf 'Third advice. to be puft up with pride and arrogance on account of your rank. That is a wicked gentility (fays S. Austin, Serm. 27.) which makes you contemptible in the fight of God by its pride. On the contrary, be fo much more humble, as you are more great, according to the precept of the wife man; By how much greater you are, fays he, by so much bumble yourself more in all things; and by this means you will render yourself agreeable to God; Eccl. iii. It is an excellent advice, like that which S. Ferome gives to noblemen: Prefer not yourself before others by reason of your nobility, and contemn not those who are not noble. Our religion bath no respect to persons, it regards not the condition of men, but their minds; it judgeth of nobility by their manners. There is no nobility in the fight of God, but not to serve sin. The beight of nobility is to be illlustrious in virtue; Epist. ad Celant. O what an excellent and necessary advice is this for persons of distinction!

4. Endeavour to observe well the ordi-Fourth advice.

nary vices of those of your rank, that you

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may carefully avoid them; we have hinted at some of them; you will here also find others; have a care

to encounter them in good time, that you may shun them, demanding daily of God for this effect the assistance of his grace. Remember that the justice of God will be severe towards the great and noble, and their sins will be punished more rigorously than those of others, as it is said in the book of Wisdom, c. vi.

5. Make your rank affift in advancing virtue. You will fay, How can Fifth advice. this be? See how. If being noble you be virtuous, first your virtue will be in some manner more agreeable to God, according to the judgment of S. Bernard (Epift. ad Soph.) Befides, your example will move others to virtue, your discourse will have more authority to perfuade them to good; they will give credit to you, when you mildly reprehend their faults. You will have means of comforting the afflicted, credit to relieve the oppressed; you may often take up quarrels, and reconcile enemies. Practife all these things, and God will give a bleffing to your rank, and you will be great both before God and men.

See many other things which concern gentility, in Part. V. Chap. XI. Art. 3, and 4.

CHAP. XII.

The obstacles arising from benefices.

I Shall not here speak of all the obstacles which benefices may bring to the salvation of the incumbents, but only of those you may meet with during your youth, reserving to speak of the others at the end of this work. I shall here take notice of four among others.

First obstacle. The first consists in this, that being an incumbent from your youth, the benefice determines you to an ecclesiastical state, be-

fore

fore you are capable to make choice of it, perhaps not fit for it, nor called by God; and perhaps, as it often happens, you have an aversion and repugnance to it. This obstacle is of great consequence, and deserves to be well considered; for those who enter thus into an ecclesiastical state, put themselves in danger of committing great faults therein, and of never obtaining their salvation in an ill-chosen state; it bringing with it vast obligations, and requiring a greater share of virtue and perfection than others, requires a more advised deliberation before engaging, to know if the vocation be from God. I shall specify a remedy for this obstacle hereafter.

The fecond obstacle springs from Second obsta-

the more particular obligation which cle.

the benefice brings of living holily.

All Christians are obliged to live up to their profession, but ecclesiasticks and incumbents have a stricter obligation to it, because the excellence of their state requires a sanctity suitable to the dignity of their functions. This obligation renders their sins more heinous, and them more criminal in the sight of God, and is the cause that, when they are vicious, they draw upon their heads the divine anger, and his forsaking them: from whence it happens, that they become more wicked than others, more obstinate in vice, and more incapable of correction and amendment.

The third obstacle arises from the Third obstacle.

obligation they have to recite the divine office, with which young incumbents generally comply very ill, altho' they be obliged to it under mortal fin, and omitting to fay it, are obliged to restore the fruits of their benefice, according to the number of the days they have omitted it. This obstacle to the salvation of incumbents is very great: for the contempt of their duty in what may so easily be complied with, and these mortal sins thus neglected and repeated, rendring them more unworthy of the grace of God, are the

the causes why they fall into many other fins, and great diforders, as we daily fee!

The fourth obstacle arises from Fourth obsta- their obligation to exterior modesty. ele. and an ecclefiaftical habit; because, as the council of Trent fays admirably

well, Altho' the habit makes not a monk, yet nevertheless the clergy ought always to wear a babit conformable to their state, that by the modesty of their exterior babits, they may discover the interior good-

ness of their manners; Seff. 14. c. 5.

But now adays incumbents, and particularly young ones, know nothing of this duty: for we see them cloathed like others, always in short garments, sometimes in undecent colours, covered with lace and other worldly ornaments, like lay-men; in long hair, and often curled and powdered, like courtiers. This is an intolerable abuse, which causes many disorders in all fuch, who think themselves obliged to as little diffinction in their lives and manners as they affect in their clothes and drefs. It is a disobedience to the church, which in all her councils complains of this diforder, and commands incumbents to wear an ecclefiaftical habit. It is a contempt of religion, and of the ecclefiaffical state, as the council of Trent calls it. It is a confiderable injustice; for is it not an unjust action, to defire to live on the patrimony of the church without wearing her badge?

Let every one look to it; but incumbents who live thus, and will not change, are not in the state of grace, neither can they receive absolution, so long as they are determined not to wear an ecclefiaftical habit. Now, if not they but their parents are in fault, as it oftens happens, they are obliged to admonish them; and the parents are not in a good state of conscience, but fin grievously, if they hinder them from wearing a habit agreeable to their state, or do not oblige them

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to it.

For the remedy of these obstacles, see what you are to do.

As for the first, consider whether you First remedy.

have a repugnance to an ecclefiaftical

life, and whether you be determined not to undertake that state; for in that case you cannot with a safe conscience keep your benefice, you are obliged to quit it, and advertise your parents, or those on whom you depend, that you have no intention of taking orders. If you be only unresolved, not having as yet determined to be or not to be of that state, you should endeavour to resolve as soon as possible.

Now if you have no repugnance, but rather an inclination to an ecclefiaftical life, think not that your benefice ought to be a fufficient mark of your vocation; for perhaps you are not fit for it. Wherefore never defift from begging daily of God, to know the flate which is most proper for his fervice, and your own falvation; and performing all that is requisite to make a good choice, as we shall shew here-

after.

For a remedy of the three other Remedy for obstacles, labour to acquit yourself of the three other the three obligations of your benefice obstacles.

just now mentioned. Live virtuously,

endeavouring to render your youth pleasing to God; recite your office exactly and devoutly; be cloathed like an ecclesiastick, that is, in long clothes, especially on Sundays and sestivals, and always when you approach the sacraments. On other days, when there is a sufficient reason for wearing short clothes, let them be suitable to your state, your hair short; avoid all ornaments, except a modesty truly ecclesiastick, which in no dress must be ever laid aside.

If you act thus, Theotime, you act like the prophet Samuel, who was dedicated by his parents in his childhood to serve in the tabernacle of God. This young child behav'd himself so faithfully in that place, that

he became acceptable to God, in proportion as he increased in age; and, as the scripture says, God was with him, I Kings ii. and the services he did in the tabernacle during his youth were so pleasing to him, that he chose him for his prophet, and manifested to all his people the choice he had made. Thus, Theotime, if you serve God faithfully in an ecclesiastical state, to which by your benefice you are dedicated in your youth, God will give a blessing to the beginning you have made, and will do you the savour one day to employ you to serve him in that holy state, and promote thereby his glory, and the salvation of souls.

CHAP. XIII.

Advice to parents upon the same subject.

A S parents are the first cause of all the obstacles which benefices bring to the salvation of their children, it is necessary to give them here a very important advice, that they may employ a proper re-

medy.

They are the persons who with an insatiable greediness seek benefices for their children. They make them take the tonsure and clerical state, before they know what it is; they inconsiderately load them with benefices which occurr, without being concerned to know whether they be sit or called by God, or whether they will discharge the great obligations of that calling. All their care is in catching at benefices, and sometimes by ill and dangerous ways, at advancing the revenues, receiving and disposing of it as they please, against the intention of the founders, and of the church herself; making their children learn a little Latin, neglecting in the mean time all the rest which is most necessary, viz. the care of making their chil-

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dren acquit themselves of the obligations of their state, fay their office, wear an ecclesiastical habit, live conformable to their profession, and of caufing them to be bred up in an ecclefiaftical spirit, and instructed in the knowledge of their duty. Wicked parents! who for a little wealth, charge themselves with all the fins of their children, and with them are involved in an inevitable damnation. And yet more wretched uncles and other relations of incumbents. who have no less disordinate affection for their nephews and coufins, on whom they blindly heap benefices, and on themselves all the ill caused in the church, as we daily fee. This was a diforder which St. Bernard deplored in the following words. For this infant, perhaps not yet born, the provident care of its parents has secured church-benefices. That child is brought up by some head of a chapter with more than maternal fondness, and indulged even criminally, being designed for a successor. This man because he nobly born, is fit to be an archdeacon; but more so if nephew to a bishop, as if episcopacy was to go by inheritance.

The remedy of this evil is in the hands of the parents themselves; it belongs to them to moderate that great greediness they have for benefices, to make more account of the salvation of their children, than of their temporal possessions, and prefer the quiet of their conscience before the advancement of their families, which benefices, instead of raising, as they think, frequently ruin.

For this effect they ought not to bestow benefices upon their children, without having seriously consider'd their inclinations, and the dispositions they have to an ecclesiastical calling; and that it may be done with greater certainty, they should not be judges thereof themselves, but make the inclinations of their children be examined by able persons, to whom they may freely declare their repugnance, if they

have

have any, to that calling, as it frequently happens, Such would judge religiously of their dispositions for that state, without interest, without complaisance, and declare fincerely to the parents the judgment they make of them. If they think the children fit for an ecclefiaftical calling, as much as they may guess in that age, parents may follow their judgment with the ensuing precautions, viz. to take a great care of the education of the children they defign for the church; make them be brought up in the fear of God, in an ecclefiaftical spirit, in the knowledge of their state and its obligations, and not in the vanity and spirit of the world, as they often do. For this end commit them to persons of piety, of prudence, of learning, who have the zeal of an ecclefiaftical spirit. Be careful that they acquit themselves of the obligation of their office; that they wear the habit of clergymen, at least as we have faid in the precedent chapter; that they live holily, as children defigned for the church; dispose well of the revenues of the benefices, employ it to discharge their duty in an honest and moderate maintenance of the incumbent, and the rest in pious works. In fine, they ought to observe the manners and inclinations of their children, informing themfelves by their mafters to whom they are committed; and if they know they are not inclined to an ecclefiaftical state, or have not convenient dispositions for it, they are oblig'd to dispose of their children in fome other employ. bestler sportered doidw

If they do otherwise than what we have said, they render themselves guilty of a vast number of sins which their children commit in an ecclesiastical calling: a horrible thing to reslect on! and for the temporal goods they have too much affected, they deserve eternal damnation, as well as their children. That they may be the more convinced of their obligation in this particular, let them take the pains to read the former chapter, and also Chap.IX. of Part V.

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Instruction of Youth

very New to initiation of him.

CHRISTIAN PIETY.

PARTIV.

Of the virtues necessary for young persons.

It IS, Theotime, is the chiefest part of your infiruction, to which the three former relate as the means to their end; for after proposing the motives to incline you to virtue, the necessary means to acquire it, the obstacles which might pervert you, and ought to be avoided by youth; there now remains to give you the practice of virtue, and shew the particular virtues to which you ought to apply yourself more carefully in your youth, to render yourself truly virtuous, and which ought to serve as a groundwork to others, which will be necessary for you in the course of your life.

their parts or virtue. Author of please God, and

That young people ought to propose to themselves the imi-

SINCE it is a truth universally received, that Christian piety, in all states, consists in imitating our Lord Jesus Christ, I would first of all propose here

here that divine pattern, to give you a perfect model of the virtues you ought to acquire, and by which

you ought to form your youth.

It was for this reason, according to the observation of one of the fathers of the church, why this divine master being come to teach and save all men, was pleased to pass thro' the several ages of man, to fanctify them all, and by making himself like unto them, more easily invite them to an imitation of him.

For this reason, says he, he made himself an infant to infants, that he might sanctify them. He made himself a child to children, giving holiness to those of that age, to the end he might afford them in his person an example of piety and sanctity, and subjection. He made himself a young man to young men, giving them a pattern, and sanctifying them for the service of our Lord; S. Ireneus 1. 2. adversus Hæreses, c. 39.

It is by this divine pattern of youth, dear Theotime, that you must form yours, and regulate your actions. It is from him that you must learn the virtues you ought to practise in that age: Look, and do according to the example which is shew'd you; Exod. xxv.

Now we find four things in the Gospel concerning the son of God during the youth of his mortal life.

the son of God during the youth of his mortal life. The first is his hidden life which he was pleased to lead all that time, not manifesting himself to men, but only to his most blessed mother and S. foseph; to teach young people to sly vanity, so natural to their age, and so prejudicial to their good, and not to seek after the esteem of the world by a vain oftentation of their parts or virtues; but only to please God, and content their parents and masters, by a solid progress in virtue and wisdom.

The second is the example of piety and religion he was pleased to give, by going to the temple at solemn feasts, according to the command of the law, although the was not obliged to it; being there, he hearkned to the doctors, and asked them questions, as if he would

learn

learn of them; he who was master of the doctors and of the law itself. An admirable example, by which he would shew young people the affection they ought to have for piety, and that their first care must be to serve God and labour for their salvation, addicting themselves to acts of religion, to prayer, to assist at the divine sacrifice, to the sacraments, to the word of God, and to seek instruction from the mouth of the wise, and from those whom God hath given them for their conduct.

The third thing is that so admirable obedience he shewed his parents, which the gospel declares in these terms; He return'd with them unto Nazareth, and was subject to them; Luke ii. 42. An example which ought to confound all young people, who have ordinarily so great a repugnance to submission. What a shame is this for you, Theotime, when you are wanting to the great respect you owe them from whom you receive life and instruction, having before your eyes the example of God (S. Bern. Hom. 1. super missas.) who obeys his creatures? And what reply will you give to the son of God concerning your disobedience, when he shall reproach you, that he was pleased to be sub-

ject and obedient for your example?

Now

The fourth thing that the gospel teaches us of the youth of our Lord is, that according as he advanced in age, he visibly increased in wisdom and grace before God and men; ibid. Which is not to be understood of an interiour increase of these two perfections in the son of God; because from the moment of his conception he was accomplished with them in a perfect sulness. But this is to be understood as to the effects he made appear in his divine actions from day to day. As the sun, which altho' he be as much adorn'd with light at his rising as at mid-day, is said to become more light according to the degrees he rises, because his light appears with more brightness to our eyes. But the gospel hath made this observation, to give to Christian youth the most important advice of the great care

they ought to have to employ their years to increase in wisdom and virtue, and to avoid that so universal a fault of the greatest part, who seem to advance in age to no other end than to diminish in innocence. It is a misfortune infinitely to be deplored, to fee that children should be corrupted according to the meafure that they grow in bigness, and that their age should serve them for nothing else but to learn vice, lying, impurity, pride, disobedience, dissoluteness, as St. Augustin takes notice of himself, l. 7. conf. c. 1. Children of Jesus Christ, is it thus that you imitate your master? He made himself a child like you, to invite you more sweetly to his imitation, and to teach you to employ your first years in the increase of virtue, and you miserably lose them in learning vice. Cast your eyes upon this divine pattern, to reform by it the abuses of your youth, which you have committed, and learn to increase in all Christian virtues, which is, to be the disciple and child of Jesus Christ. Which that you may perfectly understand, I shall here represent them one after another.

CHAP. IX.

Of the fear of God.

THE first virtue that is necessary for you, is the fear of God; it is that which next to faith is the basis and groundwork of all others. The scripture calls it The beginning of wisdom; and it teacheth us, that it is the first thing which ought to be inspired into young souls. For this reason Solomon instructing youth in his Proverbs, begins his instruction with this excellent precept, so often repeated in scripture, The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; Prov. v. And the same scripture, in the history of holy Tobias, observes expressly, that having a child, He instructed him from bis infancy to fear God, and to abstain from all sins; Tob. i.

Now by this fear we must not understand a gross and fervile fear, that regards nothing but the punishment and chastisement, which it apprehends more than the offence; but a respectful fear, by which, confidering the greatness and What this majesty of God, his fanctity, his fear is. power, his justice, we conceive a profound respect, and apprehend above all things to fall by mortal fin into the displeasure of a God so great, fo holy, fo powerful, fo just. We have already

spoken of it above, in Part II. Chap. I. This, Theotime, is that fear of God, which is the

beginning of wisdom, and the foundation of true piety. It is that, to which I exhort you here, for which you should chiefly and above all things labour. As to the obtaining it, see what you are to do.

Practice of the fear of God.

1. Demand it daily of God, for he 1. Demand it. is the author of it: fay to him frequently from the bottom of your heart, O God, engrave thy fear deeply in my soul, that it may restrain me from ever offending thee. Pfal. cxviii.

2. Conceive a great apprehension of the greatness of God. He is the sovereign Lord of all things, infinite in great sense of all his perfections, in majesty, in wif- the greatness dom, in goodness, in power, in justice. All creatures adore him, the angels

2. Have a of God.

themselves tremble at the fight of his grandeur. All that is great in the world is but an atome before him; and as he hath created all things by one fole word, fo he could destroy them all in one only moment. O immense God, there is none like unto thee, says feremy, chap. x. thou art great, and thy name is great, O king of nations, who will not fear thee?

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3. Fear to displease God by sin.

3. Fear above all things to displease God, and let that be the first and principal thing you regard in all your actions, whether God be not therein offended.

4. Speak of God with re-Spect.

4. When you speak of God, never fpeak of him but with a profound refpect; and endeavour to cause by your example, that he never be spo-

ken of otherwise in your presence.

CHAP. III.

Of the love of God.

God ought to be join'd with fear.

The love of IF the greatness of God oblige us to do ought to I fear and honour him with a profound respect, his goodness engages us as much to love him. We must fear God by reason of his greatness, which

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renders him infinitely adorable; and we must love him because of his goodness, which makes him infinitely amiable; we must not separate these two things, fear and love. The fear of God is the beginning of love, as the holy scripture says, and love is the perfection of fear. He who is without fear cannot be justified, and he who loves not remains in death. I Joh.m.

We must then love God, dear Theotime; for how can it be that you should not love goodness itself, and

We must begin betimes to love God.

We are created for that end.

him who hath loved you first? But you must love him betimes, and from your tender years; you must begin that early which you must do all your life, and during all eternity. The love of God is our last end. God hath placed you in this world on no other defign than to love him;

him; and that coming to know him for your creator, you should render that which a work owes to its workman, a creature to its creator, a child to his father, that is, love. And to oblige

you the better thereunto, he hath added all imaginable favours, having de-

And obliged thereto.

figned you for the enjoyment of his kingdom in heaven, redeem'd you when you were loft, and redeem'd you by the death of his only Son. Called you to the grace of Christianity, enlightened you with faith, fanctified you by his grace, received you often into his mercy, and replaced you among his children, after you had grievously offended him; and a thousand other bleffings hath he bestowed upon you. O, Theotime, how is it possible not to love a God who hath loved you fo much!

Now there are two things in God Two motives for which he ought to be belov'd. The one is his goodness, which he mani-

of the love of

fests unto us by all the favours and blessings he bestows upon us. The other is the goodness he possesses in himself, which makes him bleffings he bestows upon us. transcendently amiable. For, if we might suppose a thing impossible, viz. that God had never shewed us any favour, yet he deserves to be infinitely beloved. by reason of the sovereign goodness, and infinite perfections he enjoys in himself, which render him infinitely amiable. Now when I fay we must love God, I speak of both these two loves, and I mean, that we must love him for the benefits he hath bestowed upon us, and not only for them, but also in consideration of his infinite goodness, which renders him so lovely, that in the love of his goodness consists the eternal happiness of both men and angels.

But take notice, Theotime, that the love of God, to be real, ought to have one very particular condition, which occurs not in any other love: for it

The essential condition of the love of God.

doth

doth not fuffice to love God as we love creatures, but we must love him above all things, that is, more than all creatures. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, (Luke xx.) that is, more than all other things; fo that you love nothing above him, as there is nothing greater or more amiable than he; nor nothing equal to him, as there is nothing which can equal him.

And to speak briefly, the love of Wherein the God confifts in preferring God before love of God all things; before the goods of the world, pleasures, honour, friends, and consists. life itself; so that you must be pre-

pared never to love these things to the prejudice of the love you owe to God; and be refolved rather to lose them a thousand times, than to be wanting to the obedience you are obliged to render unto him. It is in this preference of God before all things, wherein the effential point of the love of God confifts; a preference without which it is impossible to love God, or by confequence to be in the state of falvation.

O dear Theotime, you must then labour early to acquire this fo amiable a love, and this fo necessary a preference, to engrave it deep in your heart : and to the end you be not deceived therein, by taking, as

very many do, apparent love for the The practice real, fee the principal acts you must of the love of practife therein, by which you may know whether you love God truly, God. or no.

/ I. Above all things fear, and have I. Have a a horror of fin, because it is displealborror for fin. ing to God, and infinitely opposite to and be refolved never to commit a fin his goodness, upon any account whatfoever.

2. Fly venial fins the most you can, 2. Avoid vebecause they displease God; and although they destroy not his love, doth

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yet they diminish and weaken it, and dispose you to fall into mortal sin.

3. Labour to acquire the virtues 3. Labour to fo necessary for you, and which he get virtue. exacts from you. It is the property of love, to desire to please him whom one loves. If you love God, dear Theotime, you will be careful not only to preserve yourself in his holy grace by avoiding sin, but you will endeavour to acquire those virtues you know will make you most acceptable to him.

4. Often in your heart and with your lips form acts of the love of 4. Advance God; wish often that God be serv'd the service of and lov'd as he deserves. Be troubled God. when you see him offended; hinder it as much as you can; and endeavour by your

words and example to move others to love him.

5. But chiefly, Theotime, practife these things in good time, and begin 5. Begin befrom your youth to love him whom times to love you must never cease to love. At God.

whatfoever time you begin to love

him, it will be always too late, and you will always have reason to express that grief which St. Augustin did; I have loved thee too late, O ancient beauty, I have loved thee too late, O eternal goodness. Conf. lib. 10. cap. 27. Beg of him frequently the grace to love him as you ought, and daily say to him from your heart those excellent words of David: O God, whether it be in heaven or hell, I love nothing but thee; thou art the God of my heart, and the part which I eternally desire. Psal. lxxii.

they diminish and weaken it, and dispose you co-CHAP. IV. not intromportal

Of the love of parents.

HE who fears God, (says the wife man, Eccl. iii.) ters those who gave him birth. Yes, The fear of Theotime, if you have the fear of God God makes us in your heart, you will honour your parents, and all those to whom he bonour our hath given authority over you, be-

cause it is his will and command. Honour thy father and thy mother. And if you honour them not, you have neither the fear nor love

of God.

parents.

For to contemn a thing so holy, which nature herfelf dictates, and which God hath fo frictly commanded, is not to have the fear of God. no menace with which he hath not threatned those children who are wanting to their duty. He fays (Prov. ix.) that be who afflicts his father, and flies from the discreet admonitions of his mother, will become infamous and miserable. Ibid. xx. He who curses his father or mother shall perish, his light, that is, his life, shall be extinct in darkness, that is, death. The eye which mocks his father, and which despises the mother who brought him forth, deserves to be pulled out by the crows, and eaten by young eagles. Ibid. xxxvi. who abandons his father, bath lost his bonour before men; and he who vexes his mother, is cursed by God. I wish these menaces were deeply engraven in the minds of all children, who forget ever fo little their duty towards their parents.

Add to these threats the rigorous law God had establish'd in the Old The Severity Testament against wicked children. 1 shall cite it all entire, that you may

read it attentively.

of the Old Testament.

If it happen, (says the law, Deut. xxi.) that a father bath a rebellious and disobedient child, who will not submit himself to the commands of his father and mother, and they have chastised him, and he would not obey, then shall his father and his mother take him, and bring him where they keep judgment, and there they shall make their complaints in this manner: This our son is stubborn and disobedient, and will not obey our admonition, and seeks nothing but debauches. Then, adds the law, he shall be stoned of the people of the city to death; so you shall take away the evil from you, that all may bear it, and fear.

This is the severe law God establish'd against rebellious children. And although it was not made in the evangelical law, yet they ought no less to fear his wrath and vengeance, whereof but too many essects daily appear, by the visible punishments he sends sooner or later to children who fail in so holy and inviolable a duty. This sin is one of those which God commonly punishes in this life; and there are scarce any wicked children to whom some punishment from God doth not befall in this life, which is often the

beginning of an eternal chaftisement.

But let us leave these motives of terror and fear to stubborn and obstinate spirits, who are not to be moved to their duty by reason and love; as for you, Theotime, who have a defign to ferve God with all your heart, these menaces are not necessary; and to perfuade you to render to your parents all the respect you owe them, it suffices to tell you, that it is highly reasonable, and the will of God. These are the two motives by which the apostle St. Paul convinced children of this great obligation. Children, faid he. obey your parents, because it is just. Ephes. iii. Children, obey your parents in all things, because it pleaseth Render then to your parents, Theo-God. Colof. iii. time, the honour you owe them, confidering 1. That it is just and reasonable; 2. That God will have it fo: so: God, I say, whose will ought to be the rule of our actions, and whose good pleasure is the most powerful motive to a generous foul.

Now the honour you ought to give Children owe to your parents comprehends four four things to principal things, which you owe them, their parents. viz. respect, love, obedience, and as-

1. Bear them a great respect, con-1. Respett. fidering them as those from whom next to God you have received your being. Have a great care of ever despising them for any reason whatfoever; either interiorly, by any thought of contempt; or exteriorly, by any words or flighting actions. Receive with respect their instructions, admonitions, and reprimands. Hearken, my son, (fays the wife man, Prov. i.) to the instruction of your father, and depart not from the law of your mother: For, (as he fays afterwards, chap. xv.) it is the part of a fool to mock at the correction of his father; he who makes his advantage of it will become more wife.

2. You ought to love them with a fingular love. Remember, (fays the 2. Love. wise man, Eccl. vii.) that you receiv'd from them your birth, and return due thanks for it. Now this can only be done by loving them. Yet take notice, that this love must not only be a natural and fenfible love; it must also be a rational love, and according to God. To love them according to God, you must love them because God command it, and as he commands it, that is, in such a man-ner that you love principally their spiritual good and falvation, and endeavour to procure it by your prayers, and all other means which lie in your power.

3. Obey their commands, and be 3. Obedience. ready to perform their will; but obey

obey as St. Paul prescribes, In Domino, In God, that is, because God will have it, looking upon God, who commands you by them; for it is God who commands you to obey them, and when you obey them you obey God; as on the contrary, not obeying them you disobey God, except they command any thing against the honour of God, or your good; for in these two cases you owe them no obedience. Nevertheless, you must be very discreet on this occasion, consulting able persons, that you may not be deceived.

4. You must affist them in their necessities, in sickness, poverty, old age, and generally in all their temporal and spiritual necessities. To forsake them on such occasions is a very great crime, which cries to God for vengeance. *Eccl.* iii.

In fine, Theotime, to keep you always within the bounds of your duty towards your parents, fet of-

ten before your eyes two very con-

trary examples. Reflect on wretched Two contrary Absolon, who having violated in all examples.

manner of ways the duty of a child to-

wards his father, met at last the just chastisement of his crime, in the dreadful and miserable death which we have recounted above. And on the other side, consider often the admirable example not of a man, but of the Son of God himself, who becoming incarnate, and made man for our salvation, would be subject and obedient to his most holy mother and St. Yoseph, until the age of thirty years; Luke ii. He who was the sovereign master of all things, to teach by his example all children the honour they ought to render to their parents, and how highly criminal it is for wretched man to refuse obeying them, from whom he hath received his life or education, when the God of heaven and earth humbled himself so far as to obey her from whom he was pleased to receive his temporal being. See Chap. I. of this part.

.V. P. H. Demino, In God, that

Of other persons whom young persons ought to honour.

Text to your parents there are other persons you ought particularly to honour.

1. You must honour those who represent them, your tutors, and those who have a charge of your person; your elder brothers and sisters, for to them

there is a respect due.

2. Your masters, whether particular or publick, from whom you receive instruction for virtue and learning. You ought to honour them by fo much more, as they represent your parents, and as the benefits you receive from them, such as virtue and knowledge (the ornaments of the mind) far furpass all worldly riches. And as you owe to your parents respect, love, obedience, and assistance; you owe also to your masters respect, love, obedience, and gratitude.

3. You ought to honour very particularly your spiritual fathers, such as your pastor, and all those who instruct you in the way of falvation, and chiefly your ghostly father; Heb. xiii. You ought to respect him much, regarding him as an officer of God; love him as the minister of your falvation, obey him and follow his advice, in which young people are often

very defective.

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4. Honour all the persons that are venerable; either for dignity, as priefts, whom the scripture commands you to honour, (Eccl. vii.) or for their age, as old men, to whom young people should shew much respect, (Lev. xix. 1 Peter iii.) or for their virtue: for if you honour God, you will also honour them who ferve him: and finally men constituted in publick authority, as the king, (Prov. xxiv. 1. Peter ii.) and magistrates, whom God commands you to honour, as representing his place, and whom he hath established for his ministers in the temporal government of men. To the first is due obedience and sidelity, as the sovereign and God's representative on earth; the same is likewise due to his ministers, in proportion to the rank and authority they hold under the prince; Rom. xiii.

CHAP. VI.

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Of tractableness.

THIS is one of the first, and chief- Tractableness est virtues of youth, which be-necessary. ing blind, subject to many faults, and not able to conduct itself, is under absolute necessity of being guided by others more knowing, and submitting itself to their conduct; and this submission is called tractableness.

It is a virtue which makes us love, What it is. willingly receive, search after, and put in practice the instructions, counsels, reprimands, and exhortations to good. O what an excellent virtue, Theotime, is this, which we may call the ornament of youth, the instrument Its commendatof good education, the mother of all tions. virtues in young persons, the source of all good, the cause of their salvation! A tractable mind is capable of all good, as an untractable mind is subject to all wickedness. We have spoken sufficiently of this virtue, and the opposite vice, in Part III. Chap. III. Read attentively and often what we have said.

I shall only add one thing here, which will make you the more easily comprehend, and earnestly feek to attain this great virtue. The wise Solamon, in the beginning of his reign, having received from God a permis-

permission to ask whatever he pleased, with full assistance of obtaining it, he begged in the first place, that the Lord would bestow on him a docile mind. For the the greatest favour he sought for, was the gift of wissom, for his assistance in governing himself and his subjects, yet he began his prayer with asking a tractable disposition, which he esteemed a necessary means for acquiring that wissom he asked of God. Imitate O Theotime, this young and wise prince: ask it often of God; and when you beseech him to give you wissom and virtue (which ought to be daily) ask for this docility of mind, without which the other cannot be obtained, and endeavour on your part to acquire so desireable a perfection, by those means we have assign'd in Chap. III. Part III.

CHAP. VII.

Of obedience.

Obedience necessary. Bedience is the daughter of tractableness: a tractable mind renders itself obedient to the will of those

who have any authority over it. It is a virtue necessary for youth, a fundamental virtue, and without which one can never arrive at solid piety; which made the wise man say, that The mind of the just will meditate obedience, Prov. xv. 28. because it is a most necessary and effectual means to acquire virtue, to which it aspires.

It is not only necessary for youth, but also so suitable to that age, that it is appropriated, and as it were natural to it. A disobedient child is a kind of monster; and an ancient author numbring up the disorders found in the world, puts in the third rank a disobedient child, which he says is a disorder bringing many others after

it. De 12. abufion, sec. apud Cypr.

Love

Love then, Theotime, this virtue, so agreeable to your age, and besides so necessary, and so powerful to make you really virtuous all the rest of your life. Obey humbly and willingly your parents, your masters, and all those who have authority over you.

I fay, obey humbly and willingly; because it is not enough to obey, but you must obey well: a constrained obedience, yielded unwillingly thro' [fear or force, is a slavish obedience; which hath no merit, nor

any shadow of virtue.

True obedience proceeds from a sense of one's duty, and a desire to please God in performing it. The first makes it humble, the second makes it volunta-

ry, prompt, and eafy.

You must obey thus, if you desire your obedience should be virtuous and pleasing to God. And by obeying thus, you learn in good time not to do your own will, but that of others. Self-conceit is the usual cause of the destruction of men, and chiefly of young persons, is an ill guide, which leads them into precipices, and makes them fall into many missortunes. O Theotime, the wise man says, that the obedient man will recount his victories; Prov. xxi. 28. If you are obedient in your tender age, you will recount one day the victories you have gained over your most dangerous enemy, your own will; you will know how useful this virtue was, and praise God for it all your life.

CHAP. VIII.

Of chastity.

Ractableness and obedience hinder the disorders of the mind, and chastity those of the body. It is a virtue which entirely slies the pleasures of the flesh, and studies What chastity to stifle the thoughts, desires, and is. sense of unclean delights, because they disolease God.

How necessary. It is necessary for all men, but particularly for young persons, who being more susceptible of immodest pleasures, have a most particular need of this virtue, as we have shewn in Part III.

But as there is no age for which it is more necessary than for youth, fo there is none to which it is more suitable and advantageous. I would to God, Theotime, you, and all those of your age, could comprehend the beauty of this virtue, with the ornament and advantage it brings.

It makes them like angels, according to the judgment of the holy fathers cited Part II. because it makes them imitate the purity of the angels in a frail body: it is chiefly in young persons where this effect is found, because their age being less corrupted by fin, their chastity approaches nearer to the purity of those celestial spirits.

And martyrs. If chaftity doth partake something of the glory of martyrdom, according to the sense of St. Jerome (Ep. ad Demetr.) by reason of the rude combats it sustains, which sometimes are no less than those of torments: it is chiefly to the chastity of young persons to whom this glory appertains, because the combats they suffer are ordinarily more violent and more frequent than those of others; which made S. Bernard say, that besides the martyrdom which is undergone by the effusion of blood, there are yet three others, that is, frugality practised in plenty, whereof David and Job shewed a pattern; liberality in poverty, exercised by Tobias and the widow in the Gospel; and chastity in youth, preserved by Joseph in Egypt; S. Bernain sent.

Lastly, Theotime, those excellent commendations which the fathers give chastity, which they call the flower and ornament of manners, the honour of the

body, the groundwork of fanctity, the prefage of all forts of virtues, chiefly belong to young men: For it is true, that chaftity in young persons is a great foundation for virtue, and all manner of good may be expected from a chafte youth: because, as the spirit of God cannot dwell in impure hearts, so it takes delight to inhabit chafte fouls, and to heap upon them all forts of favours.

Ruffin recounts to this purpose, that St. Gregory of Nazianzen being vet young, had a vision of two ladies, who appear'd to him endow'd with excellent beauties; and as the chaste young man was uneasy at their presence, they said to him, Young man, let not our presence afflict you; we are two fifters well known to you, the one of us is called wisdom, the other chastity; we are come to visit you, because you have prepar'd an agreeable babitation for us in your soul.

Thus, Theotime, chastity is inseparable from wisdom, and attracts the divine grace and benediction

upon young fouls adorned with it. In the thomself of

Labour then, Theotime, to obtain Prastice.

this amiable virtue, which you ought to

esteem the ornament and happiness of your youth; you will find the means to acquire it, and preserve it, in Part III. Now as to the practice of this virtue, remember that it may be violated many ways, by thoughts, by words, by defires, and by dishonest actions; and to be chafte, you must be so not only in actions, but in thoughts, defires, and words, and in all that may never fo little wound purity. diately discovering it. And thus it banishes

the fair, and projectes party, it is contribute, the gual I a. P. A P. D the organism of

Of bashfulness.

A S trees, in producing their fruits, produce at the fame time leaves to preserve them against the injuries of the air; fo charity, placing chaftity in a

foul, brings forth also bashfulness, to preserve it from every thing that may hurt it. It is impossible to have chastity without bashfulness, which is of singular use; and highly necessary for the preservation of chastity.

Wherein it fires, and fense of unclean pleasures, as consists, we have said: and bashfulness removes all those exterior things which may be

either the cause or effects of these thoughts, desires, &c. as immodest words, unchaste looks, lascivious gestures, kisses, and all other things which may in the least offend chastity. Bashfulness then is a virtue which sets all these things at a distance, and which cannot permit them either in one self or others, without blushing at them, as St. Ambrose remarks, I Off. 18. Now this virtue agrees particularly with

youth.

For, as St. Bernard observes very well, altho' we ought to labour in every age for this virtue, which is the ornament of all ages, yet it appears with much more splendor in youth. What is there more amiable, fays he, than a modest young man? bow beautiful and rich an ornament is bashfulness in the life and countenance of a young man? what a certain presage of a religious hope is it in a child, and an assured fign of a mind born for some great good? There is not a more apparent mark of a dove-like simplicity, nor a more evident testimony of a pure innocence. It is the lamp of a chafte foul, which shines continually, to hinder that nothing foul or indecent enter into the mind, by immediately discovering it. And thus it banishes sin from the soul, and preserves purity. It is the glory of the conscience, the guardian of bonour, the ornament of life, the seat of wisdom and piety, the first-fruits of virtue, the bonour of nature, and the mark of all purity. S. Bern. Serm. ult. in Can. Weigh well these commendations one after another, and judge of the account you ought to make of this excellent virtue. The The vice opposite to this virtue is impudence and boldness, which blushes at nothing. It is a vice as odious in young men, as bashfulness is amiable. It is the sign and effect of a wicked disposition, and it is no less the origin of many sins, than bashfulness is the mother of many virtues.

Endeavour to acquire this excellent Practice.

virtue, Theotime; and content not your felf to fly from the fins of impurity, but fly also all things that approach it, and in the least wound chastity, as all truly chaste fouls do. It is reported of St. Bernard, that his bashfulness was so great in his younger years, that Example.

when any one chanced to fpeak an un-

feemly word in his presence, he blushed as if he had received a box on the ear: you will find the practice of this virtue before in Part III.

od ni nazania (CHAP) X.

about grived and Of modesty. and

Lex T to bashfulness, modesty is also absolutely necessary for young people. Wherein it Bashfulness hath for its object the removing all exterior things contrary to chastity, which it doth not permit either in itself or others. And modesty excludes all things that may be disorder'd or indecent in the exterior of the person, as in the eyes, gait, behaviour, dress, words, and in all those things wherein irregularity is a sign and an effect of an unchaste mind.

This virtue is much to be wished The mark of for in a young man, because it is a a wife and certain mark of an interior virtue, and virtuous mind. of a wise mind, and proper for piety.

The mind is known by the actions, and the wifdom

mob

dom of a man by his exterior. Wisdom, (says the sacred scripture, Eccl. xviii. and chap. xix.) shines in the countenance of the wise. Man is known by the eyes, and a well-regulated mind by its visage. The habit of the body, laughter, and walking, discover what a man is within. Which made St. Ambrose say, (lib. 1. Off. 18.) that the disposition of the mind is known by the posture of the body, and that the exterior motion is a kind of voice by which the mind discovers itself.

So that, Theotime, if you have a wife and well-regulated mind, it will appear by the modesty of your exterior behaviour; but if you be indecent and disorder'd without, it is a certain sign that you have a light, ill-govern'd, indiscreet mind, incapable of any serious thought, and which permits itself to be carried away with vain and impertinent imaginations. And this disorder in the exterior will be a very ill sign for the present, and a bad presage of what will one day follow.

A remarkable first oration against Julian the apoexample. St. Gregory of Nazianzen, in his first oration against Julian the apostate, recounts, that, having studied with him at Rome in his youth, he

had from that time judged of him that he would be very wicked, seeing the indecency and disorder of his carriage. One might see, says he, in him many things which promis'd nothing of good; a head always moving, a wandering and surious eye, his feet never without motion, a scornful countenance, an insolent laughter, a confused speech; you might hear him making impertinent demands, and more foolish answers: In sine, he says, I judg'd from that time what he would be afterwards. And after I had attentively considered him, I said to many of my friends, O what a monster doth Rome breed up in this man!

Prastice. Cessary for your age, see what you must do.

I. En-

1. Endeavour, as much as you can, Modesty in that nothing indecent or light appear exterior acin your looks, gait, or gesture; have a tions.

ferious, fweet, and affable countenance, a reserved fight, a modest carriage, which may relish of a wise and well-educated mind. Study to be such in the company of whatsoever persons you be; with superiors, by reason of the respect you owe them; with your equals, or inseriors, because you must give them edification and good example; even when you are alone, since you are always in the presence of God. A wise and well-regulated mind is always modest wheresoever it is; because it is not modest to please men, which would be meer vanity, but to please God who sees it. Let your modesty be known to all men, says the apostle, being God is near. Phil. iv.

2. You ought chiefly to shew a Modesty in the particular modesty in the church. It church.

is the house of God, and a place appointed for prayer and his worship: you must enter there with a great respect. Have a care of yourself, (says the wife man, Eccl. iv.) when you enter into the bouse of God. You must remain there with a great modefty, and in an humble and devout posture, agreeable to the fanctity of the place. To enter there as into a profane house, without respect or refiraint; to continue there without modefly, gazing about, fpeaking without necessity, laughing with others; to be there in an indecent posture, lolling upon the feats, kneeling upon one knee, and other like irreverences, are fins which offend God more than the generality of people imagine. Judge by this, Theotime, what we must say of those who commit infolences, entertain immodest thoughts, and use unchaste looks in the church, not being ashamed to carry their crimes into the midst of the sanctuary, and offend God in the place confecrated to his adoration. It is a crime which God derests much by the mouth of his prophet, Wild. 1. And St. Augustin in his confessions, among the sins of his life, expresses a sorrow for this as for one of his greatest, for which he declares he was punished by God, tho not according to his merit. Conf. 3.

3. Modesty also regards dress, Modesty in wherein you must avoid two things; dress. fuperfluous ornaments, which discover

a vain and light mind; but much more indecent clothes, and fuch as serve to promote impurity. Be clothed then modefly, according to your condition, without feeking other ornaments than fuch as decency permits. Glory not in your clothes, (Tays the wife man, Eccl. xi.) it is a vain and impertinent glory. St. Ferome fays excellently well, ad Eustock. That a Christian ought not to seek to be affectedly or too curiously clothed. But above all avoid the ornaments which may prejudice bashfulness, whether in yourself or others. The same S. Ferome calls young people, who curl and trick up themselves wantonly, The poison of modesty. O Theotime, if you have a truly chaste heart, you will fly all these ornaments, which can ferve you to no good end, and which may much prejudice either you or those who see you. Chastity (fays St. Cyprian) bath no other ornaments than bashfulness; and she accounts berself to be sufficiently beautiful, when she displeaseth the wicked; she feeks not to be adorned, being ber own ornament berfelf. Lib. 1. de bono Pudic.

To acquire this virtue of modesty,

Means to acbe careful to practise these means.

quire modesty. Demand it often of God.

2. Be willing to be admonished when you do

any action which is not very modest, and procure a

friend who may advertise you of it.

3. When you

hear another's immodesty blamed, take notice of it to

have a care of yourself.

4. Converse often with wise

and

swallooblerve.

and modest persons, observe their modesty to imitate it. Fly the company of light minds, and of fuch as are irregular in their outward behaviour.

CHAP. XI.

Of modesty in words.

Modesty consists also in words. It is a great virtue, and principally in young men, to know how to speak discreetly; for as the wise man says, The wisdom of a man is known by his speech; Eccl. iv. Now, to speak wisely, two things are required. 1. To speak nothing ill or impertment. To speak properly at a fit time, that is, when and

how one ought.

or their shw

1. Never utter a wanton or indecent word. The apostle St. Paul, (Ephes. v.) forbids Christians fo much as to name impure things, how much more to speak of them with pleasure, or danger to our neighbour. He who speaks wicked things, (says the wife man, Wisd. i.) cannot conceal bimself, neither shall the judgment of repreach let him escape. Fly as the plague, all unchaste discourse, the pest and cor-ruption of good manners, and which causes a vast number of fins in those who discourse, and in those who hearken to them. Fly also all dubious expreffions, or fuch as incline to a double fense, which may give others occasion of impure thoughts. And lastly, avoid all indecent or scurrilous expressions, which men have so frequently in their mouths, and are not fufferable amongst the debauched, much less in you.

2. In good or indifferent discourses be not too ready or light in speaking, but hear before you speak. There are fome who are always the first in talking, and the last in holding their tongues; who meddle with every thing, interrupt others, and speak of things

things they understand not. It is the fign of an illbred, light, indifcreet, and fometimes of a proud mind. The wife man fays excellently well, When you see a man free in talking, you must expect from him more folly than wisdom. Prov. xx.

To regulate well your speech, see the maxims you

must observe.

1. Speak little, and hear much. It Rules for is the chief mark of a wife mind, to Ipeaking. hearken to others, and fpeak little. The scripture fays, that be who governs well his speech is wife, and advised; Prov. xvii. And that filence is so great a sign of wisdom, that When it is found in a man of small understanding it makes bim esteemed discreet; ibid. and Job i. 13. I speak not of a sullen melancholy filence, which springs from stupidity and heaviness; but of a wife filence, which is observed by modesty, that it may give ear to others, and speak in a proper time.

How we must behave ourselves in conversation.

chines

In conversation, when another speaks, have a care of three things. 1. Not to speak before you have heard what he fays. 2. Not to interrupt him who speaks. 3 Not to be hasty to talk,

when fomething you understand not is spoken of. There are three precepts of the wife man: Before you have beard, answer nothing: speak not in the midst of a discourse: learn before you speak; Eccl. xi. and

xviii. For, as it is the faid in the Proverbs, He who Speaks before he understands, shews that he is unwise,

and worthy of confusion; Prov. xviii. 24

When you shall be in honourable company, observe what the wife man directs you to do; Speak little, and only when you are asked, and let your answer be short. Seem not to be too knowing, but in the most part of conversations comport yourself as if you understood little of the thing which is treated. And this not by diffimula-

interrupt others,

mulation, but by modesty; Hearken to others being silent, and seek to learn of them; Eccl. xii.

CHAP. XII.

Of other vices of the tongue, and particularly of swearing.

Besides wicked and impertinent discourse, and a vanity in talking, there are also many other vices of the tongue, which Christian modesty ought carefully to retrench; the first whereof is swearing.

To be addicted to swearing is a very vicious quality, especially in young people. I speak not of oaths appointed by religion, to assure a truth when sufficient necessity requires, a necessity which seldom happens to young persons; but of those oaths so common amongst Christians, where the adorable name of God is employed and taken in vain, in the least anger, or first impatience, and sometimes deliberately, from a detestable custom of swearing by the name of God on all manner of occasions.

This fin is one of the wickedest habits a man can contract: For,

1. It is a contempt of God, to bear so little respect for his holy name, which all creatures adore, and whose sanctity makes all the angels to tremble; and this notwithstanding the express prohibition God hath made of it, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; Exod. xx.

2. It is a heinous outrage offered to his son Jesus Christ, to treat with so much irreverence the precious death he suffer'd for our redemption, and the adorable blood he shed for our salvation. An outrage which is no less than that he received by the cruelty of his executioners. He was scourged (says St. Austin) with the rods of the Jews, and he is now scourged by

the blasphemous tongues of wicked Christians. And they fin no less who blaspheme Jesus Christ reigning in beaven, than those who blasphemed him when he walked upon earth.

3. This vice causes many other fins The cause of to be committed: for besides that there is no fin multiply'd like swearing many fins. when grown habitual, it draws the curse of God upon those who are accustomed to it, by which they are abandoned to their passions, and to the occasions of fin; for this reason the wife man faid, that be who swears often, shall be filled with iniquity; and the vengeance of God shall not depart from bim; Eccl. xxv

4. This vice is very hard to be cor-Hard to be rected; tho' never so little rooted, it increases still with age, and becomes at corrected. length incapable of remedy, as those

who are subject to it do daily experience.

Laftly, it suffices to say, that this The fin of the fin is the fin of the devils, who are devil. pleased in nothing but in abusing the holy name of God: And it is a horrible thing, that Christians, who ought to praise God upon earth as the angels praise him in heaven, should offer him here the same injuries as the devils vomit out against him in hell.

Blasphemers O Theotime, fly this detestable fin, abominable before God and men, opunishment. dious in all manner of persons, but principally in young people. (Lev. xxiv.) Remember that the ancient law condemned blasphemers to death, and St. Paul delivered over to the devil two Christians guilty of this crime; To teach them, fays he, not to blaspheme; 1. Tim. i. And St. Gregory relates, how a child accustomed to fwear in his impatience by the name of God, was seized by a mortal distemper, and assaulted by malignant spirits, which caused him to depart this life in his father's arms, who being too indulgent in correcting him, had bred up in this child a great sinner for hell, as the same saint observes, l. 4. Dialog. c. 18.

The remedy of this fin, when one Remedy.

has ever so little a habit or inclination to it, is to fly the causes, as anger, gaming, wicked company, and all other things, which every one knows to be to them an occasion of swearing. But above all, it is a powerful, and even necessary remedy, to impose upon one's self some rigorous punishment every time he shall fall into this sin; as some alms, some prayers to be performed the same day, some fasting to be observed soon after, or some other painful action.

Fly also all sorts of oaths or imprecations, and certain phrases, which, tho' not oaths, tend to swearing upon occasions. Christian modesty requires, that we should not swear at all, according to that holy precept of our Saviour; I say, swear not at all, and let your words be yea and nay; what is said besides this, comes from the devil; Mat. v.

Of detraction.

Detraction is another fin of the tongue, which you

ought not only to avoid, but abhor.

To detract, is to report of another What detraca fin able to defame him, which he tion is. hath not committed, or else a fin

which he hath committed, but is not publick; for as long as the fin of our neighbour is fecret, to reveal it to them who knew it not, is to do him an injury.

Detraction is fometimes committed out of malice, as by hatred, revenge, envy, or design to hurt our neighbour.

It is done two ways.

Sometimes by indifcretion and lightness of mind, and by an inclination one has to speak of the evil he hath heard, or knows of another, which is too common

amongst young people.

Altho' the first manner of detraction be most criminal, the second nevertheless is not without sin; for it always takes away the reputation of our neighbour, it obliges to repair the honour he was deprived of. And this promptness to talk of others defects, is the result of a mind defective in charity or prudence, and often in both: for charity makes us conceal the faults of others, as we would have our own kept private; and prudence hinders us from speaking ill of another thro' heedlessness, or without necessity.

Avoid this fin, Theotime, as a vile It is odious to thing, unworthy of a generous or tru-God and man. ly Christian soul, and as an odious vice before both God and men. A detractor, says the wise man, is the abomination of

men; Prov. xxiv.

Some-

Be not therefore light in speaking of others desects, but keep them secret when you know them. The wise man says excellently well, When you have heard any speech against your neighbour, let it die within you; Eccl. xix. that is, let it go no farther. In fine, protect the honour of another, as you know it is dear to him, and as you would desire he should protect yours.

An important not detraction to speak of another's sin, remark. when it is for his good, or to prevent the hurt of others, when one tells it to a discreet person, who can or ought to apply a

to a discreet person, who can or ought to apply a remedy to it. On the contrary, it is always charity to do so; and there is frequently an obligation of conscience, and a very strict obligation, in which one is sometimes defective, out of fearfulness, or some vain pretence, which springs only from the want of charity, and affection to the salvation of our neigh-

bour,

bour, and which render us guilty in the fight of God of the fins of others. See more of this subject in Chap. XVIII. of this Part.

Of injuries and reproaches.

A length wanting sho of other in the beauty of you Fly also quarrels, which are the causes of many evils, as we shall shew hereafter: and in debates which arise, avoid speaking injurious words, utter not reproaches or threats; these are vile things, and unworthy of a virtuous foul. Call to mind, that to return injury for injury, reproach for reproach, is to wash a spot with ink, and make it yet more black; (Eccl. xxiii.) for it is to blot out an injury one hath done you, which is often only in imagination, with a fin which is frequently mortal: it is to defend your honour to the prejudice of your falvation; if that can be accounted defending your honour, which defends it by the ruin of another's credit. The spirit of Christianity not only forbids doing an injury, but also the returning it to those who first offer it you, according to those excellent maxims of S. Paul, Bless those who persecute you, bless them and curse them not, Render not ill for ill, nor revenge yourself, nor give way to your anger. Permit not yourself to be overcome by ill, but overcome ill by good; Rom xii. that is, the ill which another does you, by the good you render him.

This, you'll fay, is very hard. 'Tis true, Theotime, therefore you must learn to practise it betimes. These maxims are difficult to those who are not instructed in their youth, and have not learned to live but according to the inclinations of nature; yet they are easy to those who apply themselves in good time to do the will of God, and live according to the spirit of his son Jesus Christ, by imitating his example, and practising his maxims as a Christian ought to do, otherwise he is a Christian in name, and not in reality.

bour, and which render us guilty in the again of God of the fins of discord of this adject in

Have a care also of another sin of the tongue, which is but too common among young persons, yet very prejudicial: it is to be the author of discord, by reports which are often made by indifferetion, not regarding the evil which may from thence arise, and sometimes out of a bad defign, to stir up divisions and threats; their are wile things, slamaup

This fin is great, and more heinous than is imagined; for it is the cause of many other fins, and of all the ills which accompany quarrels. The wife man fays, (Prov. vi.) that God detefts it : There are fix things, fays he, which God hates, and there is a feventh which be detests; that is, he who sows discords

amongst his brethren.

And Ecclefiasticus fays, (Chap. xxviii.) that the fower of discord is cursed, because he troubles those who are in peace; and it is only the part of a wicked man to disturb his friends, and raise division in minds that are well united in friendship. Yes, Theotime; for as peace and union proceed from God, discords and diffensions spring from the devil. For this reason the Son of God in the gospel says, that peace-makers, that is, those who apply themselves to procure or preserve peace amongst men, are the children of God. But if those who cause peace are the children of God, Then, adds S. Gregory excellently well, those who disturb it are the children of Satan. 3 part. Pastor.

Fly this fin, Theotime, because it is most heinous and criminal, detefted both by God and men. Keep a guard upon your words, to the end you may never cause any discord among others; but chiefly be not the author of it thro' malice, or deliberate purpose. Conceive a horror against this vice, which can bring

you nothing but inevitable misfortune. 90-awife he is a Christian in same, and not in reality,

en abordant in to our; Proy. if as on the content

There remains lying, which is not the least confiderable among the fins of the tongue; and it is by so much more important that you should be solidly instructed on this subject, as it is frequent with young persons, and infinitely pernicious when become habitual.

A lie is always a fin, because it is always against truth, known to be such by him who speaks; and altho' it be not a mortal fin, when it is not in a business of consequence, nevertheless the habit of lying, altho' lightly, is not a light thing, nor of small importance.

A habit or custom of lying opens The vice it a gate to an infinite number of other produces.

vices. A lying spirit will become a cheat and deceiver in his behaviour, double in his words, unfaithful in his promises, a hypocrite in his manners, a dissembler in his actions, a flatterer, and faint-hearted when he should speak truth; bold and shameless to affirm lies, impudent to maintain them as certain truths, a swearer, detractor, mistrustful in respect of every one; for as he is accustom'd to lie, he believes that others always speak false. A mind addicted to lying will easily be so in great things, and consequently involved in heinous sins.

So that, Theotime, there are few Very prejudivices more pernicious, and principally cial to young to youth, than this custom of lying. people.

For this reason the wise man advises you, Not to take pleasure in any manner of untruth; for a custom or babit of lying is not good; that is, according to the expression of the scripture, it is very bad. Eccl. vii.

In a word, it is so wicked a quality of the mind to be a liar, that the scripture speaks strange things of it. It says, that God abbors it; that lying lips are

an abomination to bim; Prov. ii. as on the contrary, those who love fincerity in their words gain his friendship. He will destroy all those who are additted to lying; Pfal. vi. It faith, that among men a lie is an infamy, it will always be found in disorderly and illinstructed minds. A thief is more excusable than a ligr. and both of them will inherit perdition. Eccl. xx.

Lastly, This vice makes men like It makes men the devil, who is pleased in nothing like devils. more than lies. It was he who first Is bus a solo invented it, and who is the father thereof, as the Son of God hath named him with his

own mouth. John viii. Is de serve e sonsupolina

And St. Augustin after him fays, that as truth comes from God, lying takes its origin from the devil; Tract. 42. in fob. And St. Ambrose adds, that those who love lying are the children of that detestable fiend, for the children of God love truth. Serm. de Dom. Paff. Audiented sid ni revistes la

Fly entirely, Theotime, this pernicious vice in all

occurrences, but chiefly in two. ald not be

When you speak of a thing of importance, that is, when it prejudices your neighbour in his goods, honour, or eternal welfare, wherein you must have a great care, and even more than in regard of yourfelf.

2. When you speak to a person who hath authority over you; for then a lie is a very culpable imposture, as well by reason of the respect you violate, as because it frequently happens, that those falshoods notably prejudice your own good, or that of your neighbour, which you are obliged to promote when it is in your power. It is many show and no lear a

In fine, in whatfoever matter it be, and to whatfoever person you speak, accustom yourself never to tell a lie on a deliberate purpose, or with reflection. Love truth and fincerity in all your words. O what an excellent quality is it in a young man, when he cannot tell an untruth without blushing! The just, 202

fays

fays the wife man, will detest a lie. Demand of God that he give you a hatred of this fin, and frequently offer to him that prayer of Solomon, Remove from my mind vanity and lying words. Prov. xiii. As for the mind, who is there that

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belies never bee-

of fabriety.

E Nort young men to be sober, says the apostle St. Paul to Titus his disciple. Sobriety, Theotime, in the judgment of this great apostle, is necessary for youth: and altho' by this name of sobriety he comprehends generally the moderation of the heat and impetuolity of that age, which is naturally carried to an excess in all things; nevertheless he means also particularly moderation in eating and drinking, the contrary of which is very common in youth, and extream prejudicial to them.

As fobriety consists in the modera-tion of eating and drinking, it hath Sobriety optwo vices to combat with, drunkenness poses two vices. and gluttony, both highly prejudicial

to youth! for these two vices fight against four things at the same time, viz. good breeding, health, vigour of mind, and falvation.

There is nothing so unseemly in young men, as to be subject to wine or gluttony. Discreet persons have an aversion for this vice, both in themfelves and others.

We fee by experience how wine and delicious meats hurt the health, principally of young people; how the excess of the one or the other causes diftempers and infirmities, which often remain with them all their life, and bring them to their grave be-fore their time, whereas, on the contrary, fobriety preserves health and life, as is observed in many places of facred scripture. The wife man fays plainly, that variety of meats occasion sickness, and too great a repletion brings the cholick; that intemperance has destroyed many, but that the sober man shall live to a

great age. Eccl xxvii.I show want bus winner

As for the mind, who is there that does not know how these two vices are contrary to it? We daily see, that minds addicted to gluttony become stupid, gross, and carnal, according to the proverb cited by St. Jerom, (ad Nepot.) A fat belly never produces a witty mind: and those who love wine become dull, brutish, and incapable of any good.

But as for thy falvation, Theotime, it is incredible how these two vices are hurtful to it:

It produces for besides the sins of intemperance, many sins. which are committed in the excess of eating and drinking, which are in

great number, and frequently very enormous, these two vices cause a vast multitude of others; as anger, quarrels, swearing, blaspheming, immodest discourses, (Eccl. xxxi.) and amongst others the sin of impurity, which intemperance enkindles in the heart, and particularly of young men, furnishing continually new suel to that fire of immodesty, which concupiscence and the heat of that age incessantly ensures. It is very difficult (says St. Jerome) to preserve chastity in the midst of banquets; and wine join'd with youth makes a double enslaming of pleasure. Lib. 2. Ep. 9. See the rest which we have cited above out of this sather in Part III. Chap. VIII. Artic. V.

To fly entirely these two vices, and to acquire and preserve sobriety, you are to observe three things in eating and drinking, quantity, quality, and modesty.

As for the quantity, have a care never to commit any excess either in the one or the other, keeping yourself always as much as you can within the bounds of sufficiency and decency. It is the property of carnal and ill instructed minds, to eat without measure and rule, and to fill themselves with meat without any restraint.

In the quality there are three things to be avoided; delicate meats, prejudicial to health, and such as provoke impurity, as all hot spiced meats and wine, which St. Jerome says is poison to youth, and the first means the devil makes use of to move them to uncleanness. Ep. ad Furian.

As for modesty in meals, to eat with greediness, to devour all the table with one's eyes, to seek to please one's palate, to speak of nothing but sweet bits, to be the first in eating, and the last in leaving off, are things absolutely opposite to decency and temperance: the wise man gives you precepts quite

excellively impatient in fairering randon

common

When you are set down at a table, says he, behave not yourself greedily, as if you would devour all. Ask not if there be much. Begin not first to eat. Inconvenience not others by eating. Make use of the things that are brought up, rationally, and like a sober man. Make an end first out of modesty, and commit no excess, lest you displease those with whom you are. Eccl. li. You must make great account of these precepts of temperance, since they come from the Holy Ghost himself.

In fine, Theotime, be careful not to frequent the company of those who are addicted to wine and gluttony; according to the counsel of the same wise man, (Prov. xxi.) fly the places design of that use, as taverns: and chiefly, if you know you have an inclination to the immoderate pleasures of eating and drinking, use all your endeavours to withdraw yourself and amend, calling to mind that excellent saying of the wise man, He who is additted to curious meats will become poor; and he who loves wine and good cheer shall never grow rich. Chap. xxi. He means principally the riches of the mind, which are wisdom and virtue.

Befeech God to take away from you all affection to these sensual and carnal things, which never satisfy, and serve for nothing but to satten that body, which God will one day destroy, and will become wormsmeat; (1 Cor. vi.) which makes the mind brutish. and renders it uncapable of tafting divine things, (Ibid. Chap. ii.) and of conceiving a ferious thought of which St. Jerome lays is po(.ix shul) !noisavla rients but means the devil makes use of to move them to

As for modest vix nead, A Atowith greelines, to devoin all the table with one's eyes, to feek to

place one's palregna bear som to ng but fiveet bet, to be the first in eating, and the last in leaving

Two vices Syoung men are extremely adfoat bear dicted to pleasure, so they are sway in young excessively impatient in suffering things persons. In which displease them, These are the two predominant passions which reign

in youth, and which precipitate them into all the diforders we fee. Look upon all the vices and extravagances of youth, confider all the misfortunes that befall them, and you will find they fpring from one of these two fountains, either from the love of pleasures, or from anger, and often from both together. These are the two means the devil employs to deftroy young men, being well affured, that if one fucceeds not, the other would never fail. And it is frequently feen, that he ruins by anger those he cannot gain by pleafures, hurrying them by that impetuous paffion into most deplorable misfortunes. vileido bas

Wherefore, Theotime, as it most important for you to moderate this love of pleasures, so natural to your age, of which we have hitherto spoken; fo it is necessary for you to labour to repress those motions of choler, according to that excellent precept the wife man gives you; Take away anger from your beart, and remove malice from your flesh, that is to fay, pleaeech God to take away from

fure. Eccl. xi.

to fly anger.

There are fo many reasons to fly Powerful reasons anger, that it is a thing worthy of aftonishment, to see it should be so

common

common among men. I beleech you, Theorime, weigh attentively these which follow.

1. Anger is a brutish passion, which renders men like beafts: for what is there liker a brute, than a man who cannot fuffer the least thing? Beasts fly at every thing that hurts them, because they have no reason; and if you stir up yourself against every thing which dispeases you, in what are you different from a beaft? and what does your reason serve for?

2. Anger proceeds ordinarily from a want of wisdom, or from a weakness of mind, which can suffer or dissemble nothing, and discerns not the things which deferve anger, from those which do not. If then you be inclined to anger, you shew you have a weak mind, and more filled with folly than wildom. This is the judgment of the wife man, who fays, It belongs to fools to fall presently into anger : (Prov. xii.) He therefore gives you this excellent admonition, Be not subject to fall into choler, for anger rests in the bofom of the unwife; that is, anger is suitable and natural to ill-bred minds. Eccl. vil.

3. Anger disturbs the judgment and reason, and renders a man uncapable of difcerning good from bad, true from false, useful from unprofitable. It makes one frequently take the one for the other, fo that a man in anger hath nothing but the exterior shape and

figure of a man. guy offor our yloving the

4. The exterior itself is in such a manner changed, that it disfigures a man; his eyes strike fire, his countenance pale, his speech interrupted, his body trembling, his clamours, and other like alterations, are the effects of anger, which make a man as it were outragious.

5. From thence it comes, that a man in anger is insupportable to all the world, every one dreads and. abandons him, even his friends fly from him. Who can endare a mind subjett to choler? says the wise that purpose; and not iRequire visibloids od man,

man, Prov. xxviii. Stones and Sand are not so burthen.

some as a disorderly mind. Chap. xxvii.

6. How many wicked effects are The bad effects there of anger? from thence quarrels, of anger. injuries, detractions, enmities, defires of revenge, oaths, blasphemies, and a thousand other sins which it causes to be committed. This made the wise man say, that he who is subject unto anger, will be apt to fall into many sins. Chap, exvision From thence the ruin of friendship among friends, inward grudges, irreconcileable discords; from thence many missortunes, revenge, blows, duels, dreadful and miserable deaths.

Lastly, Anger is absolutely contrary to the spirit of Christianity. He who is angry at his brother is worthy of judgment. Matth. v. Says the Son of God, Learn from me, who am meek and humble of heart. Chap. xi. Charity (saith St. Paul) is patient and benign, is not provoked. I Cor. iii. Let all hitterness, choler, indignation, clamour, blasphemy, he hanished

from amongst you. Eph. iv.

Anger disturbs the jedgment and reason, and reason, and more a man Remedies against anger, named the second from bad.

If you be possessed by this passion, Theotime, use all your endeavours to moderate it: and for this intent read attentively the following maxims, and en-

deavour to practife them; si Hold noneties of I

1. Never be provoked upon small occasions: for example, if one says some light words to you, or does something that displeases you; if a servant be wanting to wait on you punctually; to be moved to choler for these things is an indiscretion, and the effect of an irregular mind.

2. If the ill done you be great, before you be troubled for it, see whether your anger will serve to remedy it, and you will find most commonly that it will be absolutely unuseful for that purpose; and if

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it be unprofitable, it is a folly to vex yourself. For example, one hath given you injurious words, or spoken ill of you; if you fall into a passion you will not repair the injury nor the detraction; you must then seek some other means, among which contempt is often the best.

3. Suppose it be fitting sometimes to manifest some discontent for the evil another hath done you, to hinder him from doing the same again, because, according to the wise man, By the sadness of the countenance the mind of him who hath sailed is corrected; Eccl. vii. yet nevertheless it can never be profitable, either to conceive anger in one's heart, or to brawl, storm, affront, or reproach. On the contrary, it prejudices your good repute, if you have any; and it is against virtue, because in all this you offend God.

4. Be then always upon your guard to prevent anger when you see it coming. Now if it sometimes prevent you, before you have been able to avoid it, endeavour to return quickly to yourself, and to be easily appealed. Generous minds are soon pacified, according to that of the poet;

Quo quisque est major, magis est placabilis ira, Et faciles motus mens generosa capit.

And as St. Jerome, (Ep. ad Demetr.) fays excellently well, It is natural to a man to be angry, but it is the property of a Christian to keep it within bounds. St. Ambrose (de ob. Theod.) recounts of the emperor Theodosius the great, that he was so much inclined to meekness, that he esteemed himself obliged very much when one asked pardon, and when he was most angry, he pardoned easiest; so that one desired in him, what was feared in others, viz. that he should be angry. O what an excellent example is this, and which deserves to be well considered!

R 4

5. When

5. When you have given way to passion, impose fome punishment upon yourself, as prayer, alms, or other things; express a trouble for it to those who the repair the injury nor the detraction; yourowas

6. There is scarce any person but says or does fomething in his anger of which he repents afterwards When therefore you shall be in choler, restrain your felf as much as you can from faying or doing any thing which passion suggests. Never believe yourfelf when you are in passion; wait till it be past, to judge whether a thing be ill spoken or done, and you will often find that it was not. I shaled novem

7. Entertain not your thoughts with the subject of your displeasure, to persuade yourself that you have just cause to be angry; this is but to cherish your passion: there is none but thinks he has a great deal of reason when he is in choler. On the contrary, persuade yourself that you may be deceived, and turn your mind to another thing. When your passion is ever, your judgment will be less prejudiced, and often far different from what it was during your anger.

8. If you defire to have an aversion for anger, consider another attentively when he is in passion; you will see nothing in him and his actions, but what will displease you. The same happens to you in respect of others when you are angry: and if you should see yourself in a looking-glass, you would be vexed at yourself, and would not endure yourself in that condition.

9. Fly the conversation of impatient and cholerick men, according to that rare precept of the wife man, Contract not friendship with a cholerick man, lest you

learn bis bumour. Prov. xxix.

In fine, accustom yourself to be affable and mild towards others, to excuse their faults, to forget injuries, to pardon eafily, not to be so nice and senfible in things which concern you, to speak mildly to all. And learn in good time, Theotime, the practice

of that adorable fentence of Jesus Christ, Learn of me, for I am meek and bumble of beart. Matth. xi. fiderate, civays guided by a fentalfical borsour, and

Of peace with our neighbour, against quarrels and Be not you fied an enmities, no me Asia way son off

A NGER produces quarrels, en- Young people mities, and other bad effects are much subwhich we have spoken of. Now it is jest to quarimportant that you should be well in- rels.

ftructed concerning these bad effects of this wicked cause, seeing that young men are much subject to these disorders. The heat of their age makes them impatient to fuffer the least injuries, indifcreet and inconsiderate to repress them any other ways than by those of passion, which carries them to diffensions, enmities, and revenge. From hence arise a vast number of mischiefs, and among others the ruin of virtue in these young souls; for where there is no peace there can be no charity, nor consequently virtue. And as the apostle St. James says, Where there are emulation and contention, inconstancy and all fort of wicked actions are there also. Chap. iii.

It is a rock which, with all possible care, you must avoid, learning in good time to hate quarrels and enmities, and to love peace and concord: for if you have not a peaceable spirit, the God of peace will not

be with you. 2 Cor. xi.

To acquire and preserve this peaceable spirit, you must have a care of three things. 1. Not to quarrel with any person. 2. Not to give occasion to others to quarrel with you. 3. To behave yourself discreetly when any one hath a difference with you.

1. Raise not therefore any quarrels with others, upon whatfoever occasion. There are some people

naturally quarrelfome, who are always at debate with others; impatient, unable to fuffer; rash and inconfiderate, always guided by a fantastical humour, and not by reason. It is a wicked and pernicious quality, the mark of a fottish and impertinent mind: for, as the wife man fays, The unwife thrust's bimself into quarrets, and his mouth provokes dissensions. Prov. xviii. Be not you such an one, Theotime. It is an bonour, fays the wife man, to be separated from debates, they are only ill-bred spirits who engage themselves therein. Chap. xx. I speak not of another fort of quarrelsome persons, who thro malice and a very wicked inclina-tion seek quarrels, and take a pleasure in raising them, and making themselves enemies: these are ungracious men, who feek their own misfortune, and find it at length, according to that of the scripture, (Prov. xiii.) The wicked feeks always quarrels, but a eruel angel shall be fent out against bim; that is, the devil will bring him fome difaster which will destroy enmines, and revenge.

2. It is not fufficient to abstain from stirring up a debate with any one, you must have Give no occa- a care not to give occasion to others fion of quar- to cause a difference with you. Sometimes occasion is given upon defign,

and deliberate purpose, which is proper to turbulent and malicious persons, lovers of difurbance, and enemies of peace. Sometimes, and most frequently, offence is given by imprudence, for want of taking care of what might provoke our neigh-This is what you must be folicitous to avoid. Endeavour therefore to abstain from every thing that may disgust your neighbour, as too great contradictions, detractions, indifcreet reports, contempts, scoffs, injuries, and a thousand other like things, the perpetual fource of quarrels and mifunderstandings among young people? any colored until Mills wor weatfocket occation. There are

3. Now if it chance that any one Carry yourquarrel with you, even when you felf wifely, if gave no occasion on your part, endeayou be quaryour to behave discreetly, not permit- rell'd with. ting yourself to be carried away with

the passion of anger, or at least returning presently to yourfelf. Above all, fuffer not yourfelf to go fo far as injuries or reproaches, as we have already faid; frive to appeale your neighbour with mildness, according to the advice of the wife man, Prov. xi. A mild answer turns away wrath, but barsh words provoke fury. Show modeftly that you have done him no wrong, or excuse yourself mildly if you have offer'd him any; if he be not pacified for that, withdraw yourfelf from his company, to let his choler pass.

But you will fay, they will contemn me, and ac-

count me a coward. I answer, that I not bovisce none but impertinent persons will do Answer to a fo, and all discreet men will praise you common objecfor your moderation, and esteem you tion. much more. If courage confifted in

quarrelling, and returning injury for injury, litigious persons, and all base souls, wou'd be more couragious than you. Courage confifts in despising injuries. diffembling them by modesty, excusing them easily, avoiding them discreetly when we can, and when we cannot, in supporting them with Christian patience, after the example and for the love of our Saviour, Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when be suffered, be threatned not; 1. Pet. ii. This, Theotime, is the courage of a well-bred mind, the generosity of a true Christian, and of a faithful servant his Son Card Jefus hath falemaly renewed bod no hybitian. I fay unto you, love your enemies, do well

brother, sava St. John, is a nurderer; 1 Joh. it.

.q A H'D hate you w Mater. v. Render not ill jor

CHAP. AXVI. uoy him lerrer p gave no occasion on your part, endea-

Of pardon of injuries, against revenge, and ting yourfalf to be carried away with

Here is yet a necessary thing for preferving peace and meekness towards our neighbour, which is the pardon of injuries." It is a virtue which must be learned betimes, by fo much fooner as it is more difficult, very rare amongst Christians, and yet absolutely necessary for falvation.

You must learn, dear Theotime, to We must learn pardon the injuries which are offered from our youth you; that is, never to harbour in your to pardon in- mind any hatred against your neighjuries on bour, whatever displeasure you have

received from him, nor to have any defire of revenge, nor wish him any ill; but on the contrary, defire his good, and shew him kindness, when his necessity, or the edification of others requires it reborn rooy in

You will fay that this is difficult. I'Tis true, but it is only hard to those who have no Strong reasons ver confider'd the reasons which obto persuade to lige them to it; which are so strong the pardon of and powerful, that they who after ne ver fo little reflection on them are not convinced, must needs have lost all

their fense and judgment. Here they are in short. 1. God will have it fo, and absolutely without any exception commands it. He hath faid in the Old Testament, Seek not revenge, remember not the injury of your fellow-citizens; Lev. xix. And in the New,

his Son Christ Jesus hath solemnly renew'd the prohibition. I say unto you, love your enemies, do well to those subo hate you; Matth. v. Render not ill for ill, faith St. Paul, Rom. xii. And he who hateth his brother, says St. John, is a murderer; I Joh. ii.

2. He

2. He commands it in such a manner, that he will not pardon your sins, except you from your heart pardon all those who have offended you. Pardon, and you shall be pardoned, says the Son of God; Luke vi. In the same measure you have measured to others, it shall be measured unto you. If you forgive not men, your celestial Father will not forgive you. Matth. vi. Judgment shall be given without mercy (says the apostle St. James, Chap. ii.) to him who hath not shewed mercy. Consider this well, and see whether you would not have God pardon you.

g. This will of God is grounded on so manifest a point of equity, that even the most obstinate cannot contradict it. Is there any thing more just, than that God should treat you as you treat others? that he should pardon you as you pardon others? that he should revenge himself of you, if you will be revenged of those who have offended you? Is not this just? Weigh well, Theorime,

what I am going to fay. You would have

God infinite in majefty and power, of A point to be fended by whom? by his own creas well confident

what

fended, by whom? by his own crea- well considered, ture, after he had bestowed upon it all

imaginable favours, and offended most grievously, and with an infinite offence, for which neither you nor all creatures together, although you should join your lamentations with them for all eternity, could know how to make him worthy satisfaction; injured, in fine, by an offence which deserves an eternal damnation, which cannot be avoided but by his pure mercy, which he is not obliged to shew you; would you, I say, desire that a God so great, offended by you so grievously, should pardon you such an offence, and remit you such a punishment; and will not you pardon your brother, one like to you, a small offence? You, who are a sinner as he is, and who have need of pardon as well as he; you, who perhaps have wronged him sirst, or at least have shewed him no kindness, or if you have, it is not comparable to

what God hath fhewn you; nay, moreover, that favour you have done him came not from you, but from God: will you, I fay, among all these considerations feek revenge and fatisfaction for your offence, and will not have God revenge himself of you? are not you unjust, yea, even ridiculous? Man reserves anger for man, and begs mercy of God. He bath no compassion of one like bimself, and be would have God take pity upon bim. He, miserable and wretched creature as be is, would revenge himself, and befeech God that be would not revenge bimfelf of bim. Who is there, fays the wife man, will offer prayers for bis fins? Eccl. xxviii. To flow ordineve such , vilue to said

After this, Theotime, what have you to answer?

this subject.

will you fay that it is hard to pardon? An answer fay also, that it is hard to obtain parto a common don of your fins from God. Will abjection on you say, that you will not? Say like wife, that you will not alk pardon of God b Say no longer in the Lord's

prayer, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, but, take vengeance of me, at I do of those who have offended me. Weigh this well, Theotime, and confider what you ought to fay and do rou nor all creatures together, althounoilagoo sintono

But you will fay, I would freely pardon him, and not revenge myfelf; but to love and wish him well who hath offended me, and would ftill do me a mifchief, this is that wherein I cannot overcome myself. If it be so, grant then that you would not have God love you, nor bestow upon you any blessing; for he will treat you as you treat your neighbour. Say that you will not love another like yourfelf, for the love of Jesus Christ, who hath loved you so as to die for your falvation when you was his enemy; and that God having loved you when you were unworthy, you will not love your brother, except he be worthy of your love. Say that you will not love your neighdedw

bour for the love of God, but for the love of yourfelf only. And altho' God commands you to love him who hath offended you, exhorts you to it; and accounts the love you render to one like you, as done to his own person; yet all this is not capable to make you quit the refentment and hatred you bear in your heart. Say, in fine, that you pretend nothing to the grace of God, and eternal life, being the scripture teaches us, that we are transported from death to life, by the love we shew to our bretbren; and that be. who loves not, remains in death, I Joh. iii.

Let us conclude, Theotime, that either we must renounce Christianity, the love of God, and eternal salvation, or we must necessarily pardon injuries, love our enemies, and render good for evil. But as this virtue is difficult thro' the corruption of nature and the depravation of the world, which cannot relish it you must learn it in good time, and demand it frequently of God. Beg of him that he would give you a meek and peaceable heart, rendering good for evil. Accustom yourself from your youth to pardon small injuries, not to render ill for ill, that you may learn to pardon great ones upon occasion, for the love of him who hath faved you, when he might most justly have destroyed you for all eternity. See St. Amb. de obit. Theod. to necessary for falvation.

things which englit to be known in .HVX neq A H, O ho are our neigh-

I als error proceeds from three

in the love of our neighbour. -digion and in

HIS virtue is the mother of the three former, and those who are destitute of it, fall into all the disorders we have spoken of in the three last chapters: for anger, diffentions, animofities, revenge, fpring only from the want of charity, and because we 967 0

love

to be known

love not our neighbour in a Christian manner, and as God commands us to love him office bulk

It is of the greatest importance, that you be in-Aructed in this virtue, because it is a fundamental virtue of Christianity, which is established upon these two laws, Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourfelf; and yet very rare, and badly practifed among Christians and bod to sast

The generality of Christians be-A common er- lieve, that to love their parents, their ror concerning friends, and those from whom they she love of our expect any favour, is sufficient, and acneighbour. count all other men as indifferent,

This is not to love our neighbour, but ourselves. Children from their youth are bred up in this opinion; they are taught only to love those who do them good, and hate those who do them hurt. From hence arise all the discords which disfigure the face of Christianity, the harshness with which men treat one another, the little support they mutually give, the small assistance they afford them in their necessities. From thence the propensity to quarrels, injuries, ill treatments, hatred, and revenge.

It is very important to disabuse young persons of this common error, and to instruct them in this virtue

so necessary for salvation.

Three things to be known in the love of our neigh-

This error proceeds from three things which ought to be known in this virtue; that is, who are our neighbours which must be loved, the motive for which they must be loved, and in what this love confifts.

1. Our neighours who must be loved are all men, even the most un-I. Who he is. known, great and mean, poor and sich, good and bad, friend and foe. 2. The motive for which they 2. The motive must be loved, is, because they are all to love him. the children of God, created to his image, redeemed by the blood of his Son Jesus Christ; because God, who is our common Father, and because Jesus Christ, who is our common Saviour, hath commanded us to love them.

3. This love confifts in three things: in desiring good to all; in doing it 3. In what it when we can, both in temporals and consists. spirituals; in bearing with their de-

fects, and excusing their faults.

This is, Theotime, true charity, which is one of the foundations of virtue, the mark of a Christian spirit, without which we cannot please God, nor have any real virtue, and wherein it is necessary you be exercised in good time to acquire it.

1. Accustom yourself to consider Practice.
all men as your brethren, and in this 1. To desire quality to desire good to all of them. good to all.

Be meek and amiable to all; have compassion on the poor and afflicted; be not envious at the rich, and those in prosperity: love the good, by reason of their virtue; the wicked, that they may become good; desiring the perseverance of the former, and the conversion of the latter. We must hate sin, which is the work of man; but love man, who is the work of God.

2. Being it is nothing to wish one good, except we do it when we can; use yourself to be ready and inclined to do good to your neighbour when you can. Now there are three sorts of goods which we may procure to our neighbour; in his body, in his honour, and in his soul.

As for the first, assist others in their necessities, according to the power

reprehend,

2. To procure it when we can.

Three forts of goods.

1. Corporal.

and

and opportunites you have: give arms freely to the poor. O what an excellent virtue in a young man is mercy and compassion for the poor! Happy those who can say with Job, Chap. xxi. Compassion bath increased with me from my infancy. Because it will attract a great abundance of divine blessings upon them during their life, and at the hour of their death, as it is said in the scripture. Tob. iv.

As for their reputation, you ought 2. Moral. to preferve it for your neighbour as much as possible. Hinder calumnies and detractions. If one be accused of a wickedness which he hath not done, defend him, and say that it is not so. If the ill he hath done be discovered, endeavour to excuse him, and hinder that it be not spoken of any more: speak of some other good he hath done, or some good quality he is endowed with: shew that detraction displeases you, and exhort him who utters it, to spare the reputation of his neighbour.

As for the good of the foul, which consists in virtue and salvation, since

it is the greatest of all goods, you must use all possible means to procure it for your neighbour. You will perform this by praying for him, by endeavouring to withdraw him from vice, and from ill occasions, when there are any, either by yourself, or by others who can prevail with him, by advertising him mildly of his duty, or causing him to be admonished. Accustom yourself to do all these things to them who are nearest to you, as your friends, your companions, your domesticks, your fervants, and to those with whom you converse. This is the true love of our neighbour, to love him for his salvation and eternity.

There remains a third thing need-To bear with fary for the love of our neighbour, bis defects. which is charitably to bear with his defects, and excuse his faults, as much

as prudence will permit; not to be apt to blame and reprehend,

reprehend, either without knowledge, or with bitterness, or without any necessity or advantage. Now there is no necessity or advantage, when the reprehension doth not avail for the amendment of him who is faulty, nor for the edification of others.

In fine, Theotime, the great rule of the love of our neighbour, confifts in judging him by ourselves, according to the maxim of the wise man, Judge of that which concerns your neighbour by yourself; Eccl. xxxi. and in practising that great maxim of the scripture, and which nature herself teaches us, Do nothing to another which you would not have done to yourself. Tob. iv. And also do to others the good which rationally, and according to God, you would have done to you in the like occasion. 'Tis the maxim our Lord has taught us in those words, Behave to others as you would have them do to you. Matth. vii.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of fraternal correction, or of the obligation of hindring another's fin, when in our power.

W HAT we have said of the obligation charity imposes upon Christians, of procuring the falvation of our neighbour when we can, deserves a more particular reslection, it being a thing of high importance, and nevertheless infinitely neglected, and for the most part absolutely unknown. This obligation is not understood what it is; it is taken for a new language, and for a thing almost incredible.

Yet there is nothing more common in the facred scripture, which teaches us, that God hath given the charge of his neighbour to every one; Eccl. xvii. that we should edify one another, mutually admonish one another. Not to be partakers of the works of darkness,

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that

that is, of the fins of another, but reprehend him

freely. I Theff. v.

In fine, to love God above all things, and our neigh-bour as ourselves. For how do we love our neighbour as ourselves, if his greatest necessities, which are those of his salvation, move us so little, that we abandon them for our least interests, which are frequently only in the imagination, and trifles? And how do we love God above all things, if we neglect to hinder him from being offended, when some means is offered to effect it?

This obligation is so great, that it hath made St. John Chrysoftom deliver an astonishing expression (Adversus vituper. vitæ Monast. lib. 5.) viz. that God will require no less account of us, of the salvation of our neighbour than of our own; and that when we shall have lived all our life very piously, if we have neglected the falvation of others upon occasions, the fanctity of our life will be unprofitable, it being certain, that that negligence is so criminal that it alone may be the cause of our damnation. He gives the reason, because he who is wanting to affift his neighbour in his corporal necessities, is rejected by God at the day of judgment, notwithstanding the good he hath otherwise performed: much more he who neglects to fuccour his brother in a thing of far greater consequence, as is the falvation of his foul, will deferve all manner of punishments. The discharge of this great obligation depends upon

the practife of the commandment of fraternal correction which our Lord hath given us, and whereof he hath prescribed the order in Chap. xviii. of St. Matthew, in these words, If your brother sin against you, go and reprehend bim secretly; if he hear you, you have gained him; if he hear you not, take one or two others with you; if he will not hear them, tell the . Not to be for there of the works of didnud.

That you may understand this com-oo of smill mandment, fo much unknown, and Five things of fo ill practifed, I shall observe here consequence to four or five truths, which will facili- be observed in tate the understanding and practice of this command. for that effect. From whence it follows, that to dit

The first is, the end of this com- Its end. mandment, which is to remedy the a san anon misfortune of our neighbour, that is, to hinder that our neighbour, who hath finned, may not relapfe into his fault, or that others do not offend by his example or inducement. How it to Bolton act how

The second is, that this command- The persons it ment obliges not only superiors, but obliges.

all forts of perfons, it being a com-

mand of charity, which, as St. Thomas faith, every

one is obliged to have; him sid rebuild of beirsone

The third is, that this obligation is The circumunderstood only when these two cir- stanceswherecumftances occur. I. When we know in it obliges. the ill committed, and the apparent danger that our neighbour will relapse into it, or cause others to fall therein 2. When we can hinder the evil of another, and find a remedy of it; for what is not in our power, cannot be commanded.

The fourth is, that this power of stopping the mifchief, is not only understood of what we ourselves may do, but also of what we may effect by another's means. This is what our Lord made evidently appear, in faying, if he hear not you, take some other perion with you; and if he still continue to persist, tell

the church.

The fifth remark is, that what he fays of telling the church, that is, the superiors, may be performed either privately or publickly; and that when the first way, that is, the fecret, fuffices to hinder the evil, as ordinarily it doth, we are not obliged to the fecond. at of his boother christian tell in fin?

Thus

Thus, to collect all these observations, and join them together; the commandment of fraternal correction obliges every one to hinder the evil or fin of another, when he knows it, and can remedy it, by himself or by other persons, who may be employed for that effect. From whence it follows, that to difcharge one's felf of the obligation of this command. ment, one is obliged to divert the mifchief by an-

other, when one cannot by himfelf.

We have already manifested the greatness of this obligation, in which one cannot fail without a heinous fin, and the neglect of it will be found most unjustifiable at the divine judgment. In effect, Theotime, is it not highly criminal before God, to fee or know any one in danger of lofing his foul, and neglect the affiftance proper in that state? And to be no more concerned to hinder his neighbour from mortally offending God, when he can, than to divert him from drinking a glass of water? If any one (fays St. John) sees his brother in nedessity, and shutteth up his compassion from him, when he bath wherewithal to assist him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? I Joh. iv. If this be so in corporal necessities, what will it be in spiritual? S. Chryfostom (de ferend. repr.) fays, it is an extreme cruelty to neglect thus a neighbour. And if it be an unspeakable harshness not to help to raise a beaft fallen under his burthen, how can it but be the utmost cruelty not to do that for the foul of his brother, which men do for brute beafts? A beaft fallen (faith St. Bernard) finds those who raise it; a foul is destroyed, and no one concerns bimself. Hom. 4. in I Cor.

If the old law (fays S. Chryfostom, Hom 4 in 1 Cor.) strictly commanded not to neglect the ox of our enemy when he is found strayed, but to bring him back to his master; what pardon ought he to expect, who negletts and abandons not a strayed ox of his enemy, but the foul of his brother-christian lost in fin?

If

If your brother (fays S. Austin, Ep. 109.) had a mortal wound upon his body, which he would conceal for fear of incision, would it not be an inhumanity in you to conspire by your silence with him in his design? As on the contrary, you would shew him a great kindness, to discover his missortune to a physician, to apply a remetaly to it. With how much more reason ought you to do the same thing for the wounds of his soul, since they are far more dangerous to be neglected, and permitted to putrefy in the heart, lest they cause death in him, and infect others with their stench?

In fine, if you should see the beginning of a fire, which you might easily put out either by yourself, or at least by advertising others who might do it, would you not be guilty of all the mischief if you were defective therein? From this comparison judge of your own guilt, if, knowing your own neighbour's fin, you keep it a secret from those who might put a stop to it. Doubtless, you are answerable to God for all the evil your neighbour commits, which by a secret and charitable admonition you might have prevented. How many mortal sins are there committed in con-

sequence of such a like negligence as this?

Consider, Theotime, and weigh well all these reasons. What would you answer to God in his dreadful judgment, if thro remissines, vain fear, or miserable complaisance, as it frequently happens, you
should be so missortunate as to fall into that criminal
negligence? What reason could you alledge to have
hindered you, which can be an equivalent for the salvation of a soul you might have effected, or one mortal sin which you might have prevented? What will
you say when you shall be reproached, that you had
a greater apprehension of displeasing your neighbour,
than God; and that frequently, by indiscretion, anger, or malice, you were not assaid to divulge the
same thing, which you would not discover secretly by
charity? But what will you answer when it shall be
made

made appear, that you might have often hindred the wickedness of another, without any danger, and that you had only an imaginary fear, or rather a great flackness, or foolish complaisance, which hath hinder'd you from it? You will then see yourself partaker of the sins of another, and charged with many faults which you might have hinder'd, and which were caused by your silence: God will exact an ac-

count of you for them.

You must avoid this misfortune, Theotime; and to perform it, practise what the Son of God hath prescribed us. When you see any one offend God mortally, as by swearing, talking uncivilly, soliciting you to wickedness, or know of any notable disorder, endeavour to divert him from it, if you can, by your mild and charitable admonitions. If you cannot, as not having sufficient courage to do it, or sufficient authority to hinder it, do what our Lord appoints you, employ discreetly other persons therein, which you know can perform it better than you, and particularly those who have the conduct of him, whom you know to have gone astray.

This is the rule which St. Augustin, after our Lord, gives on this occasion, in his 109th epistle, where he adds these excellent words, which are inserted in the canon law; Believe not, says he, that it is to do burt to your neighbour, to discover thus his wickedness to cure it: on the contrary, you are guilty of his ruin, if when you might heal his evil by declaring it to the physician, you permit him to perish by your silence. After-

wards he adds the comparison cited above.

Now if we must act thus even when the neighbour's sin hurts but him alone, we are much more obliged when it prejudices others, whether By ill example, or his wicked discourse; for then he must defist from his particular admonition, which can avail nothing, and go directly to them who can, and ought to watch for the good and salvation of others, that

he

he may prevent by them the mischief, and hinder the ruin of another, or of many, following that rule of St. Thomas (2, 2, 9, 23, a, 7.) and other divines.

For conclusion, Theotime, I shall give you that excellent saying of St. James the apostle to meditate on. Brethren, says he, if any of you go astray out of the way of salvation, and any one shall contribute to his conversion, he ought to know that he shall save the soul of his brother, and that his sins shall be forgiven him. Chap. v.

at the and procure the coor or a factor. Many virtue

gally, when we know in

but shoog the 10, Of friendships. Down the song oil at

I Speak here of friendships, because they conduce much to bring youth to good or evil, according as they are good or bad; and fince young people are much inclined to love, and besides, not having sufficient light to discern good friendships from hurtful, it often falls out that they contract very bad friendships, which prejudice them very much, and are most commonly the cause of their destruction.

There is a difference between the love of our neighbour and friendship. We must love all men in the manner we have said, but we cannot have friendship with all men, because friendship is a mutual and

particular love.

It is a reciprocal communication What friendof affections, by which two persons ship is. particularly love one another, and mutually procure good to one another.

Friendship is such as is the subject on which it is founded; if we love in a friend a wicked thing, the friendship is bad and vicious. If we love a vain and frivolous thing, as beauty, good behaviour, the friendship is frivolous and impertinent. If we love a

good thing, the friendship is good and laudable. Now this good thing must be a real virtue, or a perfection which may advance virtue, as science, fine parts, or the like.

Three conditions of friendship to be good. Friendship, to be good and real, ought to have three conditions, which you must observe well. It must be founded upon virtue, tending to vir-

tue, and conducted by virtue.

1. It must be built upon virtue, that is, we must love a friend by reason of some good and laudable

quality, which we know in him.

2. Tending to virtue, because friendship ought to desire and procure the good of a friend. Now virtue is the greatest and most necessary of all goods: and the friendship by which friends procure favours to one another, if it neglect mutually to advance virtue according to its power, is not a friendship, but a manifest deceit.

3. It ought to be directed by virtue, that is, virtue ought to be the rule of it, and one friend should do nothing for another which may be contrary to virtue. Friendship which causes God to be offended for a friend's sake, is a detestable and cursed friendship, because it makes one love man more than God.

By these three conditions, Theotime, you will easily discern good friendship from evil, and those you

ought to fly, from those you ought to feek.

You ought to fly the friendship of those in whom you find no virtue, nor any perfection which you may love, as especially the friendship of those you know to be subject to any vice, as to impurity, drunkenness, swearing, whose friendship will make you learn their wicked qualities; because, as the wise man says, A friend of fools, that is, of vicious people, will become like them. Prov. xiii.

Fly all friendship which doth not tend to your improvement. Such is the friendship of those who search fearch after nothing in your love but their own profit, or some vain complacence they take in loving you, or being beloved by you; of those, who when they can, do not advise you for your good and salvation. But above all, abhor the friendship of those who solicit you to fin, or flatter and cherish you in the vices you have. You ought to avoid these friends, as your greatest and most mortal enemies.

Avoid the company of all those who scruple not to offend God for your sake, and to please you; for example, to rob, to cheat, to quarrel, to swear, to detract, to treat ill their neighbour, to challenge in a duel, and other such like things. Have a horror for these friendships, and account that maxim for certain, that be who is unfaithful to God, cannot be a friend to a man; (S. Amb. 3 Offic. cap. 19.) and altho' he might, yet you cannot adhere to that friendship,

without making yourself an enemy to God.

On the contrary, feek after the friendship of those who you know carry themselves well, and are endowed with some good qualities, by which you may profit; who will move you to virtue by their example and good discourses, who will affift you therein by their counsels, not flatter you in your vices, but freely and charitably admonish you, according to that fine observation of the wife man, Prov. xix. Wounds from a friend are preferable to the deceitful embraces of an enemy. And in fine, those who in their friendship have the fear of God for their rule, and your greatest and most defireable good, which is your amendment and falvation for their principal end. Thefe, Theotime, are the good and real friendships you must by to much more feek after, as they are most rate, and carefully entertain when you have found them. Thefe are the friendships whereof the wife man speaks, when he fays, that a faithful friend is a strong protection, and he who hath found him hath found a treasure; he is more worth than all gold and silver, he is a medicine for life and immortality. Eccl. vi. Love and feek after fuch friends, apply yourfelf to find them, and when you have met with one, conferve him carefully, and abandon him not thro' levity, as young people rations. But above all, abhor the friencob viranibro

To find this friendship, remember first, to demand it often of God, for he is the author of it, and be who fears him (fays the wife man, Eccl. vi.) will find it. In the second place, be careful to love first; for you must love to be beloved: but this love must be fuch an one as we have faid, built upon virtue, tending to virtue, and directed by virtue. duck and other fuch like things. There a horror for

at heart a so to C. H. A. P. LXX our st odes and soil s ages ... S. Amb. 7 Othe. cap. 19.) and althor the

nere trendings, and account that maken (or cerem.

Of sports and recreations, without making vourilly an enemy to Good as within

D Ecreation is necessary to relax the spirits, and A particularly of young people; and that which is taken in sports is most proper for them, it being more proportioned to their nature, and the capacity of their mind. v thins Hiw only restrooth hose

Pastime then and recreation is not contrary to virtue, but rather commanded; and it is an act of vir-

tue when it is done as it ought. I'w edi to not ware

To be fuch, it is necessary above The motive of all things that the motive be good; fort. that is, that it be taken to recreate the mind, and to make it more ca-

pable of labour, which it could not be able to undergo, if it were always employed. So that labour is the end and motive of sport and recreation, for which it is defigned. We recreate ourselves on account of the fatigue we have undergone, and in order to unhe figs. that a faireful friend is a fire .somrogen and he ends buth found from bath found a receipter; he

From thence three conditions follow, which must be observed in pastime, that it may be good and virtuous.

Three conditions to be observed.

The first, to observe moderation; for if it be taken in excess, it is no more a recreation, but rather an em-

Moderation.

ployment; it is not diversion to be made more fit for labour, which is the sole end pastime ought to have, but only for pleasure, which is a vicious end; yea, it is to make one unsit for labour, because excess in amusement dissipates the spirits, enseebles the forces of the body, and oftentimes considerably prejudices the health by the distempers it causes.

The second condition is, not to An orderly have a disorderly affection for amuse- affection.

ments, as it happens frequently to

young persons. This affection makes them fall into the excess we spoke of, lose much time, think continually of the means to divert themselves. It is the cause that they seldom apply themselves seriously to labour, and when their body is at study, their mind is at their sport and divertisement.

The third condition is, to fly as much Avoiding as possible from games of bazard; such games of bagames keep the mind too much tied to zard.

them, principally young people's: they

ferve not to recreate the spirits, but to give them more disturbance; it is hard to observe therein a moderation, one is so engaged either by loss or gain.

They play there only out of cove-

tousness and for gain, which is a wicked The bad efend; add the ordinary losses one suffests of play.

fers, which leave after them displea-

fure, vexation, and despair: join to these the cheats, unjust gains, choler, swearing, quarrels, of which these sorts of games are ordinarily full; the excessive loss of time, the dissipation of mind and goods, the wicked habits of anger, of impatience, of swearing, of

of lying, of covetoulness, and many others, which play produces; the diforderly inclination to play, which continues all their life, and frequently ruins their estate and honour, and reduces them to extream miseries, as we daily see but by too many examples, and in fine, makes a man incapable of any good.

Avoid these sports, Theotime, as absolutely contrary to your salvation, Practice. and addict not yourfelf but to commendable pastimes, which serve for the diversion of the mind, or exercise of the body, observing therein the conditions we have spoken of, and chiefly keeping yourself from excess, which St. Augustin in his confessions (lib. 2.) acknowledged to be one of the causes of the wickedness of his youth. Now this ex-cess is understood not only of the time employed therein, which ought to be well regulated, but also of the money you play for, which ought always to be very little; otherwise you will play for gain, and not for recreation, and the sport will be a rack and disquiet, rather than a diversion. Besides, the money you lose at play would be better employed amongst the poor, whose necessities will cry one day to God against your excesses, and those of all gamsters.

herve not confreereate, the fairire, but to give them om a difurbance :IXX h. R A Co e the en a co-

deration, one is so engaged either by loss or gain. Of liberality against covetousness.

Youth must be A LTHO' it may feem that coarm'd against vetousness is not an ordinary coverousness: vice amongst young persons, yet it is very necessary to arm them against

ely and for gain, which is a wicked

con bring pally young per

this passion, which easily taking root in young souls, is fenfibly augmented, and causes vast disorders in their life. To impostence of sail-right

Cove-

Covetousness is a disorderly love of Two forts of money. There are two sorts; the covetousness. one, which makes us love money, to heap it up, to get treasures and purchases; the other,

which makes us affect it, to squander and employ it in pleasures. The first is very rare amongst young people; but the second is very common, and highly prejudicial.

Experience makes appear that it is How common usual with them; for as they earnestly among young love their pleasures, they seek all persons.

means of gratifying them, which cannot be effected without money: from hence it comes
that they apply all their endeavours to get it; from
hence the cheats and tricks they make use of towards
their parents, to get it from them; from hence their
cozening in play, their hard-heartedness to the poor,
and sometimes robberies and unjust ways to procure
it; from hence the love of riches, which we see in
young minds, the desires of great fortunes, the imaginary designs they lay to obtain them.

This passion having thus taken its How prejudibeginning in youth, easily increases, cial.

and strengthening itself by age becomes so strangely rooted, that it can never be pulled up all the remainder of their life. And it causes that so general a disorder which is found amongst Christians, and which the prophet deplores, when he says, Ferixvi. 13. that from the least to the greatest, all are given to coverousness; that is, to the irregular love of the things of the world, which St. Paul (1 Tim. vi.) says is the root of all evils.

This vice takes its origin from three Three causes causes in youth. The first is, what we of avarice in have now spoken of, a disorderly love young men. of pleasure. The second is, the com-

mon example of the world, which they fee loves and effects money above all things, and runs after it

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with insatiable greediness. The third is the fault of parents, who inspire this love into their children from their tender years, discoursing of nothing but the care to get their livelihood, if they be mean or poor, or of advancing and aspiring to a higher fortune, if they be rich; teaching thus their children that which St. Cyprian reproaches them for (l. de oper. eleem.) that is, to love more their riches than Jesus Christ; and to labour in such a manner for the goods of this mortal life, that they think little or nothing on the eternal.

This evil, dear Theotime, must be It must be pre- prevented in good time, and hindred wented betimes. from taking possession of your heart, it being certain, that there is no vice which increases more with age than this, and which becomes more incapable of remedy. For this effect take notice of what I counsel you.

First means. greatest cause of this covetousness in young people, springs from the love of pleasures, use all your endeavours to moderate that passion, which may be said to be one of the greatest mischiefs of youth, the cause of all the missortunes it commits, and the chiefest obstacle to all the good it can do. In the name of God pass not from this place without making resections upon it, and thinking how necessary it is to restrain and moderate such immoderate love of pleasures.

Second means. not take possession of your soul, think often of that maxim of St. Paul, that covetousness is the root of all evil. These evils are the sins of the world, and the missortunes with which it is replenished, whereof the greatest part springs from this wicked cause, as it would be easy to make appear.

Third means. 3. Be persuaded, that riches damns many, be they rich or poor; the rich

by

by the ill use, the poor by covetousness. Know, fays the fame apostle, that the covetous bath no part in the king dom of God. Eph. v. and boiler of Hall . To home

4. Accustom yourself not to desire Fourth means.

money but for your necessities, and for your innocent recreations; and when you lack it. bear that want with patience, confidering how many poor there are who have not necessaries, and that you are no better than they. Above all, never make use of deceit, imposition, nor any other unlawful way of getting it.

5. Avoid certain actions which are Fifth means.

the marks or effects of avarice in young people, and which excite it much; as to play for gain, to be too fearful of losing at play, to dispute for a small thing, to keep any thing from another, and much more never to take any thing be it what it will, which is, befides the fin committed, a damnable custom, and of very dangerous confequence.

6. Love the poor, give alms freely, allot fome part of the money you have Sixth means. for you recreations, to fupply their

necessities. Is it not a shame in you to be prodigal in your pleasures, in your clothes, in your superfluities, and to be so covetous, so hard for the necessities of the poor, who are men like you, and fometimes better than you in the fight of God?

In fine, you are either poor, or of an indifferent fortuneptorrich will i 668; for white not notife

If you be poor, beg of God the grace to take your poverty with patience for penance, and for his love. Confide in his providence, which will never be wanting to his fervants. If God bath care of the least creatures, according to the faying of our Lord, bow much more will be have of you? Seek then, fays he, first the kingdom of beaven, and all things necessary shall be given you. Read the fixth chapter of St. Matthew, from vers 240 list on liw of tall in bouldan vigno de

If your fortune be moderate, endeavour to be content, and not to disquiet yourself by the desire of a greater. Call to mind what St. Paul says, that these who desire to be rich, fall into temptation and snares of the devil, and into many wicked desires which plunge them in perdition, because covetousness is the root of all evil. I Tim. vi.

Wherefore practife the best you can that great maxim which the same apostle gives to Christians; Let there be no covetousness in your manners, being contented with the goods you possess, being God bath said,

I will not for sake you. Heb. vi.

notes flame in you to be prodical

If you be rich, stand in great sear of the danger to which your riches expose your salvation. Wo be to the rich, says the Son of God, because they have bere their consolation. Luke vi. On occasion of a rich young man, he said, that it is very difficult for the rich to be saved. To avoid the dangers thereof, read and practice what we have said in the chapter of the obstacles of rich young persons, in Part III. Chap. X.

in Proget may C H A P. WXII.

WHAT I have faid in the preceding chapter concerning alms feemed too short, considering the importance of the subject, when I prepared this edition for the press in 1668; for which reason, dear Theotime, I shall here treat that matter more at large in this place, to induce you to an early love and practice of what is so highly agreeable to God, and so necessary and profitable to your salvation.

There is no virtue more extoll'd nor more earnestly recommended in the Holy Scriptures than charity to the poor, and compassion for the miseries and necessities of others. In the old law God hath so strongly enforced it, that he will not allow any one to

be

be reduced to the necessity of begging. Deut. xv. The pious Toby admonishes his son never to turn his face from the poor, assuring him that for so doing, God would never turn his face from him, but assist him in all his necessities. The wise man (Eccl. iv. and Chap. xxix.) cautions you not to disappoint the poor of his alms, nor to turn your eyes from him: not to give him occasion by your refusal, to wish ill to you, because his prayer will be heard; on the contrary, an alms given to the poor, will intercede for him who bestowed it.

In the New Testament nothing is so frequently recommended as alms: the Son of God has declared, Luke xi. that they shall obtain pardon for sins. He has promised to be bountiful to us if we are so to the poor, and that he will deal with us as we behave to our neighbour, Luke vi. St. Paul has said after him, that the alms we give to the poor, are so many sacrifices for obtaining the mercy of God, Heb. iii. And St. John in his first epistle, Chap. iii. assures us, that he who has not compassion for the necessities of his neighbour, cannot say he has charity, or that he loves God; because if he loved God, he would assist his neighbour whom God has commanded him to love, like himself.

But of all that is said in the scripture concerning alms-giving, nothing more clearly evinces the obligations of it than what the Son of God will say at the day of judgment to the elect and the reprobate. To the first he will say: Come ye blessed of my Father, posses the kingdom prepared for you: because I was hungry, and you gave me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was naked, and you clothed me, &c. To the reprobate he will say: Go ye cursed into everlasting fire; because I was bungry, and you did not feed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink, &c. He adds, that what is given or refused to the poor, is given or refused to him.

It is very furprising, that of all the good works which the just shall have done for gaining life everlasting, the Son of God should attribute their salvation to the charity alone, they have exercised towards their neighbour! And that of all the crimes, by which the wicked have deferv'd eternal damnation, he should only point out their hard-heartedness to the fufferings of others! And as the Son of God, the wildom of the eternal Father, did nor faid nothing without the strongest reasons, we can assign no other for the expressions he will use at the day of judgment, but only that he would let us fee by those words, how great a value he fets upon the charity show'd to others; and that the just by charity deferve a continuation of his grace for their final perseverance; as on the other side, the wicked, through their want of compassion for the wretched, have deserved to be disregarded by God, when involved in the miseries of sin, and being abandoned by him as they abandoned the poor, have died impenitent, and are loft for ever.

Would to God that all Christians reflected seriously on these astonishing words of the Son of God, and what will befall them at the day of judgment, if they neglect to affift their neighbour. Then they will see

their error; but, alas, it will be too late! For your part, Theotime, who are defirous of labouring betimes in the great affair of falvation, be not displeased if I warn you to prevent so great an evil, and exhort you to accustom yourself from your youth to acts of charity, according to your abilities. Delight in taking compassion on the miseries of others. When you see a poor man, or one in distress, remember he is your equal, and if you do not suffer like him, it is owing to God's great goodness towards you: but on this account, he expects that you imitate him in your behaviour to others, and that you affift them with what he has bestowed upon you, employing employing for their relief what you lavish away in diversions, and perhaps oftentimes in offending God. Cherish, as you grow up, this amiable virtue of compassion, imitating holy Job, who says, that compasfion for the miferies of others increased in him from his infancy. In order to a right practice of it, follow exactly the advice Toby gave his fon concerning alms; and observe the great advantages he assigns to this great virtue. His words are these, Chap. iv. My son, give alms of thy substance, and turn not thy face from any poor, lest God turn his face from thee. Give alms according to thy ability; if thou bast but little, be not afraid to give a little; for thou layest up a good store for thyself against the day of necessity: because alms delivers from death, and suffereth not the soul to come into darkness; for alms is a good gift before the Most High, to all them who use it. Weigh well these words, Theotime, and imprint them in your mind.

This advice teaches you many things, the first of which is, that young persons are not exempt from the obligation of almsgiving, it being designed for

one of your age.

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u, ng The second is, that these alms must be out of your own substance, not out of that of others, whether stolen, or unjustly acquir'd; but out of what is properly your own, or allowed you for your diversions.

Thirdly, never to behave harshly to the poor, as young persons are to apt to do, who are often strangers to all compassion for the miseries of others, be-

ing entirely taken up with their pleasures.

In fine, it teaches you that the your abilities be but small, yet you are not excused from giving to the poor; it lays down a rule, which is to proportion your alms to your substance; if considerable, to give largely; if small, to give little, but chearfully. For it is not the largeness of the alms which God regards, but the affection with which it was bestowed; not how much, but out of how much. Which is to be understood

derstood of those who have but little; for as to the rich, their alms are the standard of their charity, since a rich man, who gives little, shows his compas-

fion for the poor to be very small.

Read attentively, Theotime, this advice, and look upon it as particularly defigned for your instruction concerning alms, how you ought to behave, and the advantages you may expect from thence: by it you will learn betimes that spirit of compassion for the miferies of others, so amiable in young persons, and perpetually drawing down the bleffings of heaven. You must not alledge that you have no other money but what is allowed you to spend, for it is out of that you are to give charity, depriving yourfelf of some little pleasure, that the necessities of the poor may be relieved. Two good works will arise from hence; you will affift the poor, and deprive yourfelf of some pleasure, which may contribute to atone for your fins.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of bumility.

Have referved this virtue for the last, as that which gives perfection to all others, and which is necessary to preserve them, and make them increase in young fouls.

Pride, an inordinate esteem of one's felf, is most pernicious to all men, but Pride creeps particularly to young persons; it naeasily into young minds. turally creeps into their mind, accord-

ing as they advance in age, in virtue, in science, or such other perfections which they have, or think they have; it makes them incapable of all good impressions, and opens the way to all forts of vices. aut of born much.

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My child, have a care that pride never bear dominion in your thoughts or words, because from it all the misfortunes of the world arise, says the holy man Toby

to his fon. Chap. iv.

I say unto you also, Theotime, preserve yourself from pride, permit it not to take possession of your mind, banish it sar from you; humility is necessary for you, in suppressing the opposite vice, the cause of so much evil. Not a humility of behaviour or words, but a true, solid, interior humility; an humility, which renders you hum
Three forts of ble in these three manners, in yourbumility.

felf, towards God, and towards men.

1. Be humble in yourself, that is, 1. In one's self

in your own proper efteem; conceiving no inordinate efteem for yourself, according to that just remark of the wife man, Eccl. vi. value not your felf for any thing whatfoever, neither for your riches, nor for your quality, nor beauty, or good behaviour; for the pride one takes in these things is mean and impertinent, and belongs only to vain minds; nor for your wit or knowledge, for these are the gifts of God, and you offer him an injury when you arrogate efteem from thence; much less for virtue, for it fprings far less from you, and he who glories therein, puts himself in danger of absolutely losing it. Be-sides, we often imagine we have perfections which we have not, consequently we are deceived if we value ourselves for them; and when we find in ourfelves any thing valuable, we ought to give the glory to God, who is the author of it, and not to ourselves, who have received it, and fay from our heart, Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give the glory. Pfal. cxiii.

It is an excellent maxim of St. Bernard, which ought to be deeply engraven in your mind, that in all the favours God hath bestowed upon us, he hath reserved nothing to himself but the glory of being the

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author

author of them; and leaving to us the whole fruit of them, it is very unjust and criminal that we should take to ourselves the profit, and also the glory of them, retaining our part, and usurping that which belongs to God, after he hath declared that he would give it to no one; I will not give, says he, my glory to another. What therefore will thou give us, O Lord? (says St. Bernard, Serm. 13 in Cant.) I give you my peace, I leave my peace to you, saith he. It sufficeth, Lord; with thanks I receive it, and quit what thou reservest to thyself. I know myself an immense gainer by it. I disclaim all pretensions to glory, as belonging to thee alone, lest I lose what thou art pleased to bestow upon me. I desire thy peace, and nothing more; in the enjoyment of it, I possess thee, who art our peace, and in whom the rest is united. Weigh this well, Theotime.

2. Be humble towards God in con-

greatness, before whom you are nothing in comparison of that power, of that sovereign majesty, at which the angels themselves tremble. Acknowledge the offences you have committed against this infinite greatness, the savours which without number you have received from his bounty, the abuses you offer'd it, the account you must give in his judgment, the necessity you have of his grace for your salvation, with a thousand like things, and you will find reason enough to humble yourself, or rather annihilate yourself before God.

3. Be humble towards men. There 3. Towards men. are those who are humble towards God (for how should not a wretched creature abase itself before its creator, its Lord, its judge?) but they are proud in respect of men, and so have not true humility. To practise this humility towards men, you ought to know there are three degrees: some are above you, others your equals, and others

ereffed nothing to himfelf but the glory of being the

others inferiors; to all whom you must behave with

humility, but in a different manner.

As to the first, be respectful, trac-Respect totable, and obedient to all those who wards supehave any authority over you. Suffer riors. humbly to be reprehended; if you do

otherwise, you are proud. Honour also all those who furpals you in any thing, in age, in science, in

quality.

As for your equals, endeavour to Towards equals

treat them always with esteem, with

honour, with deference, without being conceited of yourself, without being fond of respect, or desiring precedency; you must leave these vanities to those who affect them.

As for your inferiors, be mild and Towards inaffable to all those who serve you, feriors.

considering them as your brethren.

And you, masters (says the apostle St. Paul, Epb. vi. 9.) treat your screants mildly; refraining from threats, remembring that you have a common mafter with them in beaven, who bath no respect of persons. Shew yourfelf humble and gracious to all that are of a meaner condition than you, according to that excellent precept of the wife man, Be affable to the company of the poor; be ready to serve and affift them in their necessities.

In fine, a great means to reprefs pride, is to confider what man is, his baseness, his miseries, the shortness of life, and what follows after death. Dust and ashes, what dost thou glory in? (fays the wife man, Eccl. x.) All authority is but of a short continuance. To day a king, to morrow nothing; and when man shall be dead, he will inherit beasts, serpents, and worms. O God what a motive is this to pride!

Respect not, Theotime, many exterior things, which environ you, and raise in you pride and vanity, but confider what you are in yourfelf, and you will find

reason

282 The Instruction of Youth, &c. reason enough to be humble; it is the advice St. Ber.

nard (Medit. c. 3.) gives you in those excellent verses which I shall present to you, to meditate attentively on.

Youth and beauty, wealth, and th' world's applause,
Make man forget his nature, and her laws.
His life's a toil, conception sin, a pain
His birth, and needs must die. Why then so vain?
His corps will worms posses; and stench and dread
Will worms succeed. See then what's man when dead!

The meaning is, that if man will confider himfelf attentively, he will find reason enough to repress his pride; he will find that his conception involves him in fin, his birth in mifery, that his life is a continued chain of labours, that death is an unavoidale necessity, and that after death he shall possess nothing but stench, corruption and horror, as to his body. But as for his foul, she is to be presented before the judgment of God, to receive there the decree of her eternal happiness or misery; a judgment which shall be terrible to the greatest saints. This is abundantly sufficient to curb the pride of man, and preserve in him a profound humility if he reflects on it: do you so from time to time, and learn from your infancy not to be proud, but humble and modest in your thoughts and actions. thermefs of life, and what follows after dear

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and afters, repair doft those given in ? (says the wife man, Each m) the carbority is our of a floor, continuance To day a king, to marrow nothing , and colors more

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Of the choice of a state of life.

THIS instruction would be imperfect, and deflitute of one of the best and most necessary parts, if after having shewed how we must live during youth, it should not direct how to make a good choice of the condition or state wherein the remainder of this life is to be spent. This choice is a subject, whose knowledge is so much more necessary to young persons, as its importance is unknown to the greatest part of men, and the faults that are there committed are most commonly irreparable; or if sometimes they be repaired, it is with very great pains and difficulty. Besides, they are not light, or of small consequence, because the effects of them are extended thro' the whole life of man, and pass even to his eternal salvation, of which they often draw the ruin after them. For this reason, Theotime, I befeech you read attentively this last part, whether before you enter upon this deliberation, or when you shall be at the point of making your choice, and also after you have made it; for you will find an advantage by it at any of those fea-CHAP. fons.

CHAP. I.

How important it is to make a good choice of a state of

HIS importance is built upon Two fundamental truths two truths, which are to be inthis matter. supposed here as fundamental in this

The first is, that altho' all states may be good, yet all states are not good for every one; and that fuch a state is profitable for one man, which will be hurtful for another, all not having the same inclinations, nor the same capacities, nor the same affistance from God.

The fecond is, that God who hath established by his providence the diversity of states and employments for man, distributes them differently by his wisdom, defigning some for one employment, others for another: as a father of a family divides amongst his domesticks the offices of his house, as he judges proper. For this reason he gives to men different inclinations, various natural abilities, as well corporal as spiritual; and also distributes amongst them his favours diversly, according to the several necessities of different states, to which he calls them.

These two truths thus presupposed, evidently manifest how important it is to choose well one's state and condition: for if all states are not good for all, it is then most important to choose advisedly, that we may not fall into a state which may be improper for us. And if God call each man to one state more particularly than another, it follows that we must proceed therein with great circumspection, to choose what is most conformable to his will, and for which he hath given us most capacity, and prepared most grace. souls

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This choice is of such consequence, How important on it depends all the good of tant the choice man, both for this life, and eternal of a state is. salvation. Be attentive, Theotime, to comprehend the mischiefs into which an ill choice of a condition casts men, and into which it will plunge

you, if you be defective therein.

1. For the present life, what good,
what contentment can he expect, who present life.

is enter'd into a state which he hath ill chosen, and for which he is not proper? There is no condition more miserable. The displeasure of seeing himself engaged against his inclination, joined with the difficulties he undergoes to acquit himself of his duty, casts him into a perpetual disquiet and melancholy, which makes him insupportable to others and himself, and find in his condition a more horrid prison than that of criminals, and chains more unmerciful than those of gally slaves.

2. As for falvation, what can a 2. For falvaman do in that state? For besides, tion,

that melancholy casts him into a continual idleness, and that idleness into vice and perdition; with what trouble must be effect his salvation, in a state wherein he hath neither ability, nor vocation from God? The want of these two things will occasion an infinite number of fins, which would not have happened in another state. The defect of capacity makes him find continual difficulties in fatisfying his duty, and the particular obligation of his state. The defect of vocation is the cause why he wants many graces he should have received in another calling, and of which he is made unworthy, being entered rashly into this condition, without consulting God, or feeking his will. And certainly, if we fearch into the cause of the disorders we see in each state, ecclefiaftical, religious, and fecular, wherein many discharge themselves of their duty very badly, we

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shall find the greatest part of the mischiefs spring from this source, an ill entrance into a state of life; and that the greatest part enter unadvisedly, without examining whether they are proper for it, and called by God.

A profitable I exhort all those who deliberate on the choice of their state, attentively to reflect upon these three things.

1. Upon the displeasure and sadness they will feel

all their life, for having made an ill choice.

2. The great number of fins they will commit in a state they had lightly chosen, and which they would not have committed in another condition.

3. The danger to which they expose their falva-

tion, in chusing after this manner.

They who will attentively consider these three things, will take care not to be desective in an affair of this importance.

CHAP. II.

Of the faults that are ordinarily committed in this choice.

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Four usual faults in this young men are accustomed to fall into, in this so important a choice, which are the causes why they

fucceed therein fo very ill.

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First, they deliberate not at all up
1. They delibe- on this choice, and instead of chusing rate not.

a state according to the rules of reafon, and after a long and serious deliberation, they engage themselves in a calling sometimes by a sudden passion and fancy, sometimes by occasion, and frequently by the sole inclination they
feel

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feel to one condition rather than another, without examining whether they are proper for it, whether it be for their good, and whether they shall effect therein their falvation.

Secondly, when they deliberate, they acquit themselves ill, that is, 2. They delibeupon ill grounds, and regard other rate ill. ends than fuch as they ought to have

before their eyes in this deliberation. Some look upon the sweetness of life in the state they would embrace; others upon riches and preferment; others upon honour and reputation; and in a word, all regard temporal goods, and the present life; but few propose virtue and eternal falvation, which chiefly, and before all things ought to be confidered. One fays, this is proper to promote me in the world, and advance my fortune; but he doth not fay, it is fit to advance me in virtue, and effect my falvation; or else it is not suitable to me, because I foresee I shall offend God in many occurrences; I fee therein obligations I cannot fatisfy, many occasions and dangers of ruining me.

This fault is great, and against all reason; for, to deliberate wifely of the flate wherein we must spend our life, we must regard the end for which life is given us: this end is the service of God, and the salvation of our fouls. We must then refer the calling we choose to that; to do otherwise is to lose our way at setting

out, and fuffer shipwreck in the port.

The third fault is, that in delibera- 2. Without ting on the condition they ought to counsel. embrace, they only confult with them-

felves, without asking counsel of any one. This fault is very common amongst young people, and besides, one of the greatest they can commit in this choice: for what appearance is there of deliberating well on the most important affair of life, in an age wherein we have as yet neither judgment nor experithem

ence of any thing, without taking counsel of wise and discreet persons? This cannot but be the effect of an insupportable rashness, or certainly of a great ignorance, which deserves so much more compassion, as it is the cause of many mischiefs. If the wise man recommend so much to young people, (Prov. iii. Eccl. iv.) Not to trust to their own judgment, to do nothing without counsel, is it not in this so important affair, more than in any other, where they ought to follow this advice of the Holy Ghost himself? Observe well this fault, for the devil often makes use of it to deceive young persons in the choice of their calling. We shall tell you hereafter, who are to be consulted on this occasion.

There is a fourth fault yet more 4. They confult dangerous, which is, that in this deliberation they confult not him who not God. ought to be confulted with above all others, viz. God himself: they have no recourse to him by prayer, humbly to demand of him his holy inspirations, and grace to know his will, altho' it be by him alone that we can succeed well in this choice. He is the father of lights, he is the author of good counsels. Besides, it belongs to him to give us our calling, and the employment wherein he would have us ferve him in this life, we must receive it from his hands. He hath often declared in the scripture that he expects we should have recourse to him, and to advise with him in important affairs; he accounts himself offended when we are defective therein, and frequently permits such enterprizes to miscarry, to the confusion of those who will not seek his will. See a convincing example the trouble as visit

The Israelites, desirous to fly the persecution of their enemies, took a resolution to return into E-gypt, of their own heads, without consulting God to know what they should do. He reproached them exceedingly by his prophet, and threatened

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them that their defign should not succeed, but have a dreadful iffue, as in effect it had. Wo, fays he, be to you fugitive children, who abandon me to enter upon a design without consulting me, and to begin an enterprize without expecting my will; adding to your former fins a new one, of taking your resolution without my counsel. Your design shall turn to your misfortune and confusion. Isaiah xxx. I would to God all those who deliberate of the choice of their state, had frequently these words in their memory. This example shows clearly what befalls those who undertake affairs of consequence without consulting God. A fatal event, too often the lot of those who commit the fame fault in choosing a state of life, an affair of the last importance, old on anoismidini viod bas stuent to them when they have need of his affiliance. The

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Of the means to choose well a state of life. And first, that a good life during youth is a means highly necessary to succeed in this choice.

A FTER having shewed you the faults which are accustomed to be committed in the choice of a condition, I come to the means you must employ to succeed therein.

The first I assign you, is a means on which few persons reslect, althor it be most important in this affair, viz. a good life during the time of youth.

I propose this means, Theotime, to teach you betimes a truth which the The sins of greatest part of men are ignorant of, youth the or learn it too late, which is, that cause of an ill there is no greater obstacle to the choice. choice of a happy calling, than the

sins of youth; and that the most ordinary cause of the bad election many make of their condition, is a

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diforder'd life, and full of fins, which they lead whilft they are young.

It is not hard to manifest this truth, The proof. which many experience daily. God, in punishment of their fins, not affording them the favour to know the calling proper for them, abandons them in this choice of so great importance, as they have deferted his fervice: he denies them his light, as they have refused him their obedience and love. They have given their first years to the devil, and God permits also that the devil should deceive them in this election, making them undertake a state contrary to their good. And as they would not hearken to the voice of his commandments and holy inspirations, he also gives not ear unto them when they have need of his affiftance. They shall call upon me, fays he, and I will not bear them; they shall seek after me, and shall not find me; because they have bated instruction, and have not received the

fear of God. Prov. iii.

The scripture is also full of the like menaces, by which God affures us he will deny his light to those who have made themselves unworthy by their fins. Those uttered by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel are aftonishing. Many of the chief Israelites being come to this prophet, to confult God by his mediation, God speaks to the prophet, and tells him, (Ezech. xiv.) that be would not answer them, that is, he would not let them know his will, because they were wicked, and still kept their wickedness in their hearts. He adds, that who foever should come to his prophet, to know by him his will, bearing also his sins in his heart, without having entirely parted with them, he would answer him according to the multitude of his iniquities; that is, he would not answer him at all, but would permit, by refusing his affistance, that he should be deceived in his resolution, and that the event should be unfortunate, as his fins deserved.

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The history of kings furnishes us A notable exwith a terrible example of this truth ample. in the person of Saul first king of

Ifrael. i Kings xxviii. This prince had excited the choler of God against him, by his disobediences and ingratitudes. One day he found himself reduced to a great extremity, environed by his enemies with their army, and in the necessity of either hazarding a battle, or infallibly perishing. Not knowing what to refolve on, he fends to the priests and prophets to confult God, and know what he must do in this so presfing an occasion. But God, who was displeased at him, answer'd nothing, nor made his will known to priest or prophet. He consulted God, says the scripture, who answered nothing, neither by dreams, nor priests, nor prophets. This unhappy prince seeing himself thus abandoned by God, took a resolution which despair prompted: he goes himself to consult a witch, and asks of her that she would bring him to the fight of the ghost of Samuel, who was dead a little before, and had been a father and director to him. Happy had he been, if he had always followed the counsel of that man of God. God permits that this wicked means should succeed, and the ghost of Samuel appeared to him, but it was only that he might learn from him his destiny. Why dost thou ask me, said Samuel to him, since God hath forsaken thee? Know, that God will accomplish in thee all that he hath foretold by my mouth, because thou hast not obeyed his voice; and it is in punishment of that disobedience that be bath abandoned thee in this necessity, and not answer'd thee to day; and besides, before to morrow pass, thou shalt be conquered by thy enemies, and shalt die together with thy children. All which punctually fell out.

What a frightful example is this! to manifest the truth we here established, that God abandons men in their most urgent necessities, in punishment of former

And I would to God it were as rare as it is terrible, and that it were not daily renewed in fo many young persons, whom God abandons in this so important an affair, of the choice of their calling, by reason of the sins of their youth; for what other cause can we assign for what we see in many? Some choose a state quite contrary to their good and salvation, and which is often the cause of either their temporal or eternal ruin. Others continue in a long and perpetual irrefolution, which hinders them from refolving upon any state or condition, and makes them lose the best part of their life, which they spend thus in idleness, and frequently in vice. Others toffed with a perpetual inconstancy, are distaissfied in all forts of callings; have scarce made choice of one, but feek after and defire another, which hinders them from ever fucceeding in any. Are not all these things, I say, visible and manifest effects of the punishment of God for the fins committed in youth? And we may fay with truth to every one of them, as Samuel did to Saul, That which thou sufferest at present, is in punishment of the disobediences thou hast committed against God.

For conclusion, Theotime, I give you this admonition, which you can never reflect on too much. If you be not already at the time and age of choosing your state, have a care to live so in the fear of God, by avoiding sin, that you deserve not to be abandon'd by him when you make this so important a choice, but draw upon you, by a good life, his blessing to

fucceed happily therein.

Now if you be on the point of making this choice, take notice how you have lived hitherto, before you deliberate concerning it: and if your life hath been finful, have a care of choosing yet, but first take time to amend your life, to do penance, and to be entirely converted to God, to the end your sins may not be the cause why God deserts you in this choice. I tell

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you, Theotime, if you make your election in fuch a state, you expose yourself to evident danger of deceiving yourfelf, and failing in the choice you shall make.

CHAP. IV.

That to succeed well in the choice of a state of life, it is most important to think of it before it is made.

S the choice of a condition concerns the whole life, it must not be done in a day, or a short time, nor without having thought on it a long time before. We must dispose ourselves a great while for an affair of fuch consequence, that we may judge of it more feriously when we shall be on the point of deliberating, and find less difficulties, and more affistance from God in this so important a deliberation.

For this effect you have three things to do, except you be at the Three things time of deliberating upon this choice. to be done.

The first is, to live virtuously, that you may not render yourfelf unworthy of the divine favour at that time, as we have faid.

1. To live

The fecond is, to offer your prayers 2. To pray frequently to God for that end; to for that end. demand often, that he would do you the favour to make you know the condition wherein he would have you ferve him. Make me, O God, know the way wherein I ought to walk, teach me to perform thy will. Pfal. cxlii.

The third thing you have to do at 3. To think that time, is to think often on the sometimes of choice of a calling you are one day to this choice.

U 3 make,

make, not to deliberate on it, but to find out to what you have an inclination, what thoughts or motions God gives you in those moments. The observation of these things will serve much when you shall deliberate on a choice: and it happens very often, that by the inclinations of youth, God points us out the condition to which he calls us.

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20 ch 13 mizel Of the means which must be employed, in deliberating on a state of life.

HItherto we have spoken of the means which must be practised before we deliberate on the choice of our calling; now I come to those we must employ when we are on the point of making that election.

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The wife man in Chap. xxxvii. of Three things Ecclesiastes, teaching how we must to be done comport ourselves when we deliberate when we deli- on an affair of consequence, appoints three things to be done, that we may fucceed happily.

1. He faith, that we must take counsel, not of all forts of men, but of some wife and virtuous person; for after numbering up many, who are not fit to advise, he adds, Take not counsel of all those, but advise with a pious man, and whom you know to have the fear of God; and the rest already cited above, Part II.

Chap. VI.

2. He faith, that we must consult ourselves; Take counsel of your own beart, says he, or, as the Greek hath it, Establish a counsel in your beart; that is, you must deliberate within yourself, examining seriously the affair you confult of, its circumstances, its confequences, observing the inclinations or repugnances

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you feel in yourself; what you are able to do, and other like things which must be considered, sollowing that excellent advice of St. Ambrose, I Offic. c. 44. Let every one, says he, know his own disposition, and let him apply himself to that he shall choose, as the most convenient for him: let him consider first what he will sollow, let him not only know his good qualities, but also his bad, and let him judge of himself with equity.

The pagans themselves were not ignorant of this important advice, which one of their poets hath

express'd in these verses.

From heav'n to mankind, sure, that rule was sent, Of knowing thyself, and by some God was meant To be our never-erring pilot here, Thro' all the various courses which we steer.

DRYD. Juv. Sat. 11.

The wife man adds to these two means a third, without which the other two are unprofitable; that is, to consult God by prayer, and humbly ask of him, that he will conduct us in our deliberation, and in the resolution we shall take; and in all these things besech God to direst your ways in truth; that is, that he would guide you so that you should not be deceived in your choice: men may fail in their counsels, you may be deceived in deliberating, if they and you be not conducted by God, who is the author of good counsels, and can bring them to a happy issue.

These, Theotime, are the three means you ought

These, Theotime, are the three means you ought to employ for the choice of your calling, and which you ought to embrace with so much more respect, as it is the Holy Ghost who prescribes them. Now to the end you may profitably make use of them, I shall tell you in order what you must do when you

shall be on the point of employing them.

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CHAP.

con feel in yourfelf white you are able to do, and so thike things which must be considered, follower that excellent a Vict of S. Mary of J. Offic. C. 4.8.

What is to be done when on the point of choosing a

WHEN you shall be on the point of choosing V a state of life, which you ought not to do, if possible, sooner than between eighteen and twenty,

fee what you have to do.

First, being resolved, with the counsel of some discreet persons, to What is to be done. deliberate of the choice of your state, fix a sufficient time to apply yourself Take time to entirely to this important deliberation: deliberate. for example, three months, or more,

according to the difficulty you shall find in resolving. Having fettled this, you shall perform what follows.

In the beginning, and during this deliberation, have continually before Direct your your eyes, the importance of this afintention. fair, and the end you ought to pro-

pose in it.

Account this

As to the importance, be perfuaded this is an affair of the greatest conaffair of the sequence you ever had on your hands, greatest conse- your happiness both in this world and the next depending upon it.

As to the end proposed, it must be no other than the service of God and your own salvation; faying, I defire to choose a state wherein I may ferve God, and fave my foul. This must be your principal intention, temporal motives must only be subservient to this main defign.

After this advice, which is highly important, has been complied with, you must be instructed how to begin your deliberation well, and carry it on with be an the point of employing them.

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Begin by a good, and if possible, by Begin by a general confession, which I would general conadvise to be made to a discreet direction.

purpose, if you are not already provided. It will conduce to four material points. 1. To make you know whether you be in a state to deliberate on this choice, and whether your fins hinder you not, as we have said. 2. To make you more pleasing to God, and more worthy of his assistance and light. 3. By a review of your past life, you will discover your good and bad qualities, and consequently your capacity for such or such a state. 4. By it your director will gain

the greater infight for directing you.

After confession, approach the altar, and ask of God in your communion, that he would be pleafed to affist you in this deliberation you begin, and humbly offer your prayers to him for this effect: this is the beginning. During the time of your deliberation, observe what you must do. 1. Have a great care to live virtuously, flying all fin, to render you worthy of God's grace. 2. Offer particular prayers daily to God, humbly beg of him the grace to know the state to which he calls you; notam fac mihi viam in qua ambulem. Invoke also daily the Blessed Virgin to obtain this grace of God, demand the affiftance of your good angel. 3. Confess often during this time. that is, every fortnight, and communicate also at the fame time, according to the advice of your confessor. Be present at the holy facrifice of the altar as often as you can, to demand of God his affiftance. Give alms according to your power, and also perform some fasts for this intention. Recommend this affair to the prayers of your friends. Let all the good you do be referred to obtain of God the grace to choose well your calling. 4. Apply some hour of the day to think feriously on the state you must choose, and to deliberate of it within yourfelf.

The first thing to be examined in this deliberation, is the choice of two general states, under which all others are comprehended; that is, the state of continence, and that of marriage. The state of continence comprises principally the ecclefiastical and religious state, the state of marriage comprehends the different callings of the world. of nov tented w

Examine first these two general states, and observe whether you be indifferent, or have an inclination to

one of them.

If you be indifferent, take time to examine feriously both of them in the fight of God, and with a defign to choose that of the two which you shall find, after a ferious deliberation, and with good counsel, to be the better and most proper for you.

If you be inclined and carried to one of these two states, have a care not to follow presently your inclination, but examine it diligently and a long time.

And first, if it be to a lay state, consider whether you have had this inclination a long time; whether it be a good motive that carries you to that state; whether it be not a greediness after riches, a love of pleasure or ambition, as it often happens. Call to mind the difficulties and obligations of that state; and to know them more easily, descend to the particular callings of the world, which you may most likely embrace. For this effect read what shall be faid thereof hereafter in Chap. XI. and XII. Befeech God that he would make you know his will, and not permit you to embrace that state, unless it be to serve him. Protest to him, that this is your design, and that notwithstanding any inclination you have for that condition, you will reject it, if he shall make it known to you that it is not his will. Banish from your mind all bad motives of pleasure, covetousness, ambition, and vanity; and propose no other than that of serving God and doing his will. When you have done this for some time, if this inclination continue with

you,

you, you may in the name of God embrace that state, proposing chiefly to yourself, to comport yourself therein virtuously, to avoid the dangers of it, to discharge your obligations, and always to have the fear of God for the rule of your actions, and of all your whole life. But in choosing among the different callings of the world, have a care to avoid those wherein you see many dangers of offending God, and ruining yourself.

Now if you perceive yourself to be moved to the state of continence, whether ecclesiastical or religious, as you must have a very particular vocation to these two states, so you must seriously examine it, and resolve nothing therein, till after you have demanded a long time of God the grace to know it; after you have consider'd a good while the difficulties and advantages of the state you would choose; and when you have taken advice in it, we shall tell you hereafter what you must do in the choice of these two callings.

In fine, Theotime, during all the time of your deliberation, confer often with your ghostly father, declare to him all that you observe in yourself, the inclinations and repugnances you find to divers conditions, the difficulties you apprehend therein, the motives that incline you rather to one state than another:

add thereunto also the counsel of some other persons, supposing they are qualified we are about to speak of.

CHAP. VII.

Of the qualifications those ought to have of whom counsel is to be taken for the choice of a state of life.

THERE is no question but you must principally consult in this choice, him who hath knowledge of your conscience, there being none who

can fee more clearly in this affair than he, fince it is often an obscure, doubtful, and difficult business to resolve on, even with that knowledge. But he must be a man endowed with great virtue, and a singular prudence, and one who observes exactly the following rules.

1. Let him not undertake to conduct another in this choice, unless capable of it, and well apprifed by study and experience, what must be done to discover the vocation of others, and offering his prayers to

God for that effect.

2. Let him in this direction regard nothing but God, and the falvation of him whom he conducts, and let him have no other defign but to feek the will of God.

- 3. Let him divest himself of all inclination he may have to move to one state rather than another. For example, an ecclesiastick must lay aside the inclination to move to an ecclesiastical life; a religious, that of persuading to a religious state. He must be absolutely disengaged in this conduct, that he may not take his own inclination for the will of God, much less must he act upon interest, which is a crime in this concern.
- 4. Let him proceed seriously in this direction, not giving counsel in haste, and in a short time, but taking leisure to think on it, to examine all the reasons, and all the necessary circumstances, to ask counsel of others if it be convenient, without naming the person concerning whom he consults; and above all to pray much.
- 5. Let him have recourse to God, to know what he must advise according to his holy will, and for the good and salvation of him whom he advises; and let him put more trust in his prayers than his own judgment, expecting to know nothing by himself, but by the sole grace of God: for, as the wise man says, Who can know the design of God? Or who can know

bis

bis will? And who can know his own thought, except God himself give him the knowledge of it? Wisd. ix.

There happen fometimes fo great difficulties in this choice, that he who gives counsel knows not on what to refolve. Vast obstacles arise in the execution of some defign, and a man cannot tell whether they be temptations of the devil, who endeavours to divert from it, or impediments which Gods fends, to shew that he only defires the good-will, and not the execution of that defign; and then there is no other means to be taken but time and prayer.

To the counsel of the confessor may be added that of fome other persons, on condition they have these three qualifications, virtue, wisdom, and difinterestedness; that is, that they regard principally the falvation of him whom they counsel; that they confider ferioufly all things; and that they have no interest to

fee him of one calling rather than another.

amo nov sodios C.H. V. b. A. b. A. b.

Whether parents are to be bearken'd to in this choice.

Treat this question here, because it frequently falls out, that the choice of a state of life is hindered or disturbed by parents, who give not to their children the liberty of choosing, but determine them according to their inclination or interest; in which point they fin most grievously, and

render themselves culpable in the fight An advertiseof God, of all the diforders or misfor- ment for patunes which often happen, or may rents.

happen from their unjust proceeding.

First then, Theotime, if your parents leave you at liberty to choose your calling, you must account yourself happy, and give God many thanks for it.

Now if they permit you not to have the liberty of choosing, this is what you must do.

1. In respect of an ecclesiastical, or religious state.

2. In respect of a lay state.

As for the ecclesiastical or religious state, neither their counsel nor their will ought to be a sufficient reason to choose, or leave one of these callings; but you must consider whether you be called thereto by God. These two states being more perfect, and having greater obligations than others, require a particular vocation from God; which ought to be follow'd when it is known, and when it is not, you must not engage therein. For this reason, if your parents defire that you be an ecclefiaftick, or religious, first examine whether God hath called you to one of these states; and if after you have consulted a good while, you find no vocation, be careful not to enter upon either, notwithstanding any persuasions they may use, or commands they may lay upon you, even when they employ constraint and violence: yet remember to make this refistance with all the respect you owe them, shewing them modestly that you cannot comply with their defires, and the reasons you have for Cause these declarations to be made to them by persons who have some influence on them. Beseech God that he will make them change their minds, or let you know whether you must follow it. If on the contrary, they divert you from an ecclefiastical or religious state, and you perceive yourself strongly moved thereto, you must examine your inclination, to know whether it come from God; for if God call you, you must obey him, and not men. You will know whether it come from God, by doing that

God.

VIOVE

which we shall say hereafter. Chiefly, Marks of a if your inclination hath no other movocation from tive than to serve God, and procure your falvation; if it be urgent, long, and perfevering; if it still continue with you amidst the obstacles and resistances which are offered, notwithstanding all the persuasions that may be used to the contrary, it is a great sign that it comes from God: nevertheless, act nothing therein without taking advice from wise persons, who may counsel you what you have to do; to follow the inspiration of God, without offering an injury to the respect you owe your parents.

As to the choice of different conditions in the world, supposing you are determined to a lay state, you must conform yourself to the will of your parents, and yield much to their inclination and judgment; except the condition to which they design you, expose you to evident occasions of offending God, or be notably prejudicial to your good, or else that you have such a repugnance to it, that you cannot conquer it, or a manifest unsitness, or other great reasons; of which yet you alone must not judge, but by the counsel of wise and virtuous persons.

Advice to parents concerning the vocation of their

Altho' these instructions are designed for youth, yet parents must not take it amis, if I lay down some rules for their conduct with regard to their children when deliberating on a state of life. I hope they will not be unacceptable, when I assure them, that the same charity which incites me to promote the good and salvation of their children, forbids me to neglect that of their parents, oftentimes inseparably connected with it.

A little experience in the world demonstrates how often parents are to blame in this important affair. For to say nothing of those who neglect and leave

^{*} This is an addition to the preceding chapter in the edition of 1688.

their children to act as they please on this occasion; the number is considerable of those who look upon it, as it certainly is, an affair of the last importance, but behave far otherwise than they ought. They lay it down for a principle, that parents have a right, from their authority, and the knowledge they have of what is proper, to assign a state of life for their children, tho' they are often deceived.

Upon this principle they assume a liberty of designing their children for some way of life they themselves fancy before the proper time comes, and then of a sudden discover their intentions, and endeavour to en-

gage them in it.

This method would not be entirely wrong, if they observed some regularity in it, and desisted from their importunities when they meet with obstacles that ought to have their weight; such as the children's repugnance, or incapacity for such states. All good parents act thus who truly love their children, and have no other view than their real good and salvation.

But the truth is, there are many who overlook all these impediments, and are bent upon the execution of their designs, notwithstanding the dislike or incapacity of their children, setting all engines at work to compass them. At first mildness and persuasion are employ'd, displaying the advantages of the condition they have pitched upon: but when these fail, they have recourse to threats and ill-usage to ensorce a compliance.

Such methods, so opposite to reason and religion, are owing to parents having views not consistent with their children's particular good. Oftentimes family-interest influences them: sometimes a particular inclination to favour one to the prejudice of another: or lastly, self-love makes them consult their own advantage, and neglect that of their children.

I faid, such methods are opposite to reason and religion. This parents would be convinced of, if they

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consulted the one and the other with fincerity and difinterestedness.

Reason teaches them, that man being naturally free, and master of his own actions, no power on earth can oblige him to what is contrary to his good, especially where an engagement for life is the point: unless by his crimes he is obnoxious to such an engagement, or by the chance of war he is fallen into slavery; neither of which can be the case we treat of.

Reason will likewise inform them, that as parents they are obliged by the law of nature to promote their children's welfare to the utmost of their abilities; to which nothing can be more opposite than to engage them in states improper for them. Their own experience will extort from them this acknowledgement, that they would not have been used by their parents as they use their own children; and that the first kind of injustice is doing by others what we are unwilling to undergo ourselves. In fine, reason will show them that they behave worse to their children than to their fervants, fince they must own they would not willingly employ a fervant, who remain'd in their fervice only by compulfion, or was not otherwife duly qualified; and confequently they must confess their own injustice in regard of their children, whom they engage in states not suitable to their inclinations, or natural capacities.

If after consulting reason they will hear the voice of religion, they will find that parents are not only answerable for the temporal advantages of their children, but much more for their spiritual good; and that as both one and the other is closely connected with the state of life they undertake, parents are responsible to God for their children's salvation, if they

engage them in a state incompatible with it.

It will show them, that God will demand from them an account of the fins of their children, engaged in a state against their will, and without the necessary qualifications for the discharge of their duties: and that if God punishes so rigorously the neglect of parents in correcting their children (as in the case of Heli the high priest) they must expect the worst of punishments if they actually contribute to their children's sins, by engaging them in improper

states, from whence those fins arise.

It will likewise convince them, that if, according to the apostle, they are forbid to use too much harshness in governing their children, for fear of disheartening them in the way of virtue, much less ought they to engage their children in states disagreeable to them, and which will occasion numberless crimes. Blind parents! with all your foresight in wordly affairs, can you be so much in the dark where your souls are concerned? Shall ambition, interest, or passion prevail upon you to treat those so cruelly, whom the law of God and nature commands you to love? That to aggrandize some in the world, where perhaps they will throw themselves away, you will hazard the salvation of the others, and render your own desperate!

The same religion, if they vouchsafe to consult it, will inform them, that there are reasons regarding each particular of the three general states, ecclesiastical, religious, and married, on account of which they ought neither directly nor indirectly to lay any con-

straint on their children.

As to the ecclesiastical state, religion will teach them, that no one ought to engage therein unless called by God, as we shall show in the following chapter, and that parents who induce their children to it without a vocation, resist the appointments of God, and hazard the eternal welfare of their children. Besides, in this state they are obliged to perpetual chastity, a daily recital of the ecclesiastical office, and a more than ordinary sanctified life. Such an engagement must be entirely voluntary, not imposed by others, not even parents, who have no such authority: and if they

they do, they must expect to share in the guilt of all

the transgressions against such duties.

The same, or rather more may be said in regard of a religious state, wherein, by three solemn vows, they are obliged to perform three great things, perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience. The sight of which ought to make parents tremble when their children engage of their own accord, much more if they have promoted it, or by promises and threats unjustly contrived it. Can any thing equal such cruelty, as to engage children in such arduous obligations against their will for their whole lives, and render their salvation almost impracticable?

As for a married state, parents have no authority to force their children to it, much less to marry a perfon they do not like. It is a contract which necessarily requires an entire liberty and mutual affection: and as it is for life, if instead of mutual love, any aversion or opposite sentiments go with it, it proves a melancholy engagement attended with infinite miseries, scarce to be imagined but by those who have experienced them, and which must draw down the wrath of God on such parents who gave occasion to

them.

The subject is almost endless, if treated to its sull extent; what I have said is sufficient for such parents as will read it with attention. To conclude, I beg they will remember themselves to be Christians, and as such, obliged to follow the following maxims of their religion. I. That parents are not absolute masters of their children, to dispose of them at pleasure, and that their authority being inferior to that of God, who is their creator and first father, it ought to be subordinate to him. 2. That parents, in designing their children for any state, or leaving them to their own choice, ought to regard their spiritual advantage above all others, and propose their salvation as the first and principal end. 3. That their design

in this affair must be to conform to the will of God, when there are fufficient tokens of it, among which, their children's repugnance to any particular state, is often a mark that God does not call them to it. 4. That neither directly nor indirectly they do not constrain their children to engage in a state, for which they are not fit. I call indirect constraint, when a parent employs entreaties and promifes; or when he tells a child that he will not constrain him, but that. he cannot be provided for any other way: which is manifestly a constraint, tho' frequent enough in the world. 5. That they act impartially with their children, both as to their affection, and the provision for them; this God, who is not an acceptor of persons, requires, and is likewise necessary to prevent misunderstandings, which otherwise are unavoidable. But if for good reasons they are inclined to favour one more than another, let it be done with great moderation, and fo as not to prejudice very much the others, but leaving them a fufficient provision. Experience shows the sad effects of such partiality in families: the misfortunes which frequently follow are certain figns that God is displeased when parents make fuch cruel distinction among children, who all equally belong to them.

I entreat parents, who read this advice, to do it with that reflexion which is required in an affair of such importance as a vocation, which equally affects both

their own and their children's falvation.

CHAP. IX.

Of the different states of life, and first of the ecclesiastical state.

THAT you may better deliberate on the calling you ought to choose, it is seasonable that I should speak of the principal states, and propose the most important things you must consider in each of them.

I begin with the ecclefiaftical state, concerning which, if you deliberate, you ought to reflect attentively upon three things.

1. What it is, that is, how great, and what its

obligations and dangers are.

2. The vocation you must have to it.

3. The preparation you must bring with you.

ARTICLE I.

Of the greatness of the obligations and dangers of an ecclesiastical state.

rate on a state which is the highest, and most elevated of all the states in the world. It is the calling which approaches nearest to God, and which God hath established to be mediator betwixt him and men, and by the mediation whereof he communicates himself to them. His Son Jesus Christ hath committed to its trust all that is most perfect and dear to him; the ministry of his word, the dispensation of his divine mysteries, the administration of his facraments, the government of the church, and in fine, the salvation of souls which he hath redeemed by the price of his blood; a state whose functions surpass all those of angels, who look upon them with a profound respect.

spect, esteeming them infinitely above their power, and the dignity of their celestial nature. O God, Theotime, what a grandeur and dignity is this!

of an ecclesiastical state.

This fo exalted a ftate ought not to The obligations swell ecclefiasticks with vanity, but fill them with much fear and trembling; for as it is high, it brings

with it vast obligations.

1. It obliges them to a great fanctity; because they approach to God in their ministry, they are obliged to be holy. I will be fanctified, fays he, in those who approach to me. Be boly, because I am boly. Lev. x. 1. For this reason S. Thomas says (2. 2. q. 138. a. 8.) that the fanctity required for this state, ought

to be greater than that of a religious state.

And they are not only obliged to a particular and hidden fanctity, fuch as that of other Christians, but to an examplary fanctity, which ferves as a light to others. They are defign'd to enlighten others by their lives, as well as words. Son of God said particularly to them, You are the light of the world, let your light shine so amongst men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your celestial father. Matth. v. And the council of Trent fays excellently, (Seff. 21. c. 1.) That nothing more instructs others in piety, and the service of God, than the life and example of those who are consecrated to the divine ministry. And for this reason it behoveth the clergy, who are called to the lot of our Lord, so to regulate their life and manners, that in their babit, gesture, walking, discourses, and other things, there appear nothing but what may relish of gravity, modesty, and religion; and avoid light faults, which would be beinous in their persons, that their actions may cause veneration in all men.

The other obligation of ecclefiafticks, is to co-operate in the falvation of fouls; they are established for that end, and without a crime they cannot dispense with it; it is an abuse to believe, that only curates

are charged with that obligation. All incumbents and ecclefiafticks are obliged to this labour. S. Paul fays, That they are fervants of the faithful. 2 Cor. iv. The oblations are given to them by the faithful for that intent. And S. Gregory fays (Hom. 1 in Evang. Cant.) They ought to confider how criminal and punishable a thing it is, to receive the fruit of labour without labour. S. Ferome fays, That priests shall not only render an account of their own fins, but of the sins of all those whose goods they abuse, living on their goods, and not taking any care of their salvation. In c. 44. Ezech.

St. Bernard adds a dreadful thing, that at the universal judgment we shall hear the complaints and lamentations of people, who shall rigorously accuse the ecclesiasticks before the tribunal of God, as deceivers, for having lived on their goods, without applying themselves to the expiation of their sins; for having been blind guides, and unsaithful mediators of their salvation; for having cast them into a precipice, instead of conducting them to eternal life. In Decl.

O Theotime, read attentively, and weigh well the fentiments of these great saints, touching this obligation of ecclesiasticks, to engrave them deeply in your heart, and advantage yourself by them, when you

shall be entered into an ecclesiastical state.

From these two, so strict obligations, spring two extream dangers in The dangers this state. The one is, of not being of an eccle-endowed with the sanctity it requires, siastical state, but corrupted by the spirit and maxims

of the world, and much more by the contagion of many ecclefiafticks, who lead a life far removed from the perfection of their state. The other danger is, of falling into that idleness common to ecclefiasticks; which making them neglect the labour to which their calling obliges them, renders them very guilty in the sight of God, and moreover leads them into many disorders and vices, whereof it is ordinarily the mother.

Two other dangers, plurality of benefices, and bad use of ecclesiastical goods.

To these two dangers must be added two others, which arise from benefices. The first is, the possession of many benefices, when one is sufficient for an honest and moderate maintenance; for that is against the law of God, and his church, and against all reason. It is the constant opinion of

divines, that it cannot be done without a mortal fin, except it be by a particular dispensation, built upon good and real causes, which ought to spring from the necessity of the church, or from her greater advantage. I know very well, that the covetousness of incumbents finds sufficient means to disquise themselves on this occasion, under the pretences of necessity, decency, and even of piety; but when these pretences shall be examined at the divine judgment, they will appear what they are, that is, real avarice, under a borrow'd name, which will be found most criminal in the sight of God, and cause the damnation of many, who will be forry too late for having followed the disorderly motions of their insatiable covetousness.

The other danger confists in the management of their revenues, which cannot without a mortal fin be employed in wicked, or even in fuperfluous expences, as in delicacies, in good chear, in vanities, in excesses of feafts, drefs, moveables, and other like things; not to enrich their relations, or heap up treasures, which often draw the visible curse of God upon those who hoard them up. Incumbents are forbidden all And it is an absolutely certain truth, these things. that they cannot receive from their benefices more than their fufficient and modest maintenance, and the rest ought to be employed in alms and pious works. Many divines hold they are bound to restitution, when they dispose of it otherwise; and the generality condemns them at least as guilty of a mortal fin. ARTI-

ARTICLE II.

Of the vocation to an ecclesiastical state.

THE ecclesiastical state being so holy and eminent, must certainly require a vocation from God. This is the great maxim of the apostle, Let no man take this bonour to bimself, but

There must be a vocation to an ecclesiastical state.

be who is called by God, as Aaron. Heb. v. A maxim which he confirms by the adorable example of Jesus Christ, who being by himself, and by his dignity of Son of God, a priest, would not take upon him the quality of sovereign high-priest, but received it from him, who from all eternity said to him, Thou art my son, to day have I begotten thee; and in the moment of his incarnation said to him, Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedeck.

There must then be a vocation to an ecclesiastical state; and this sole example of Jesus Christ ought to confound all those who have the boldness to intrude themselves by their own motion, without a divine call, drawing upon themselves by this impudence, the wrath of God, a denial of his savours, and the

certain loss of their eternal falvation.

This being fo, Theotime, you may very well judge with what care you ought to examine your vocation, if you deliberate on an ecclefiaftical state. To succeed happily therein, see what you are to do: you must know whether the motion and inclination you feel to an ecclesiastical state come from God; for if it come from him it is a vocation, but if it comes not from him it is an illusion and deceit of the devil, who moves you to an ecclesiastical state to ruin you.

To know whether this motion come from God, you must examine two things. 1. What intention

inclines

inclines you to this state. 2. Whether you have the

requisite dispositions.

As to the intention, if it be bad, 'tis certain your motion comes not from God; for he cannot be the author of any ill. Now it is bad, if you have for the mark at which you aim, any of these ends; to live more at your ease in an ecclesiastical state; to find therein repose, idleness, or delights; to heap up riches; to be honour'd and esteem'd by men, and other like things: all these motives are bad, and if you have any fuch, your vocation is not from God, but rather from the devil. This truth is learned from St. Bernard in those remarkable words worthy of the greatest attention: All those, says he, who in ecclefiastical orders seek either bonour or riches, or the pleasures of this life; and in a word, who seek their interest, and not that of Jesus Christ, without doubt are not moved to this state by charity, which is from God, but by covetousness, which is the enemy of God, and the fountain of all mischiefs. In Declam.

Your intention then must be good, and to be so, it must have for its end these two things, the sanctification of your own soul, and the salvation of your neighbour's, which are the two

general obligations of that calling, as it hath been faid. That is, you should propose to yourself to live in that state a holy and exemplary life, and contribute to the salvation of souls by your prayers, labour, and all possible means, according to the same St. Bernard, who says (in Declam.) that he who would enter into the orders of the church, and be received into the ministry of the sanctuary, ought to have this intention, to approach to God with an absolute disengagement from the things of this world, in a perfect purity of mind and body, to be illuminated by him, and procure therein his own salvation, and

and that of his neighbour, by applying himself to prayer, and to the dispensation of the word of God.

It is not sufficient for the ecclesiastical state to have a good intention, you must besides be sit for it. There are two sorts of defects which make a man improper for that calling, the defects of the mind, and the corruption of life and manners. We shall not speak of those of the body, whereof some render a man irregular, that is, incapable, according to the canons of the church, of being admitted to orders. The defects of the mind are dullness or stupidity, rudeness, levity, ignorance, and other like, which visibly render a man incapable of discharging ecclesiastical duties. Such defects, when they cannot be corrected by age and application, are contrary to an ecclesiastical calling, and apparently discover that a man is not called to it.

The same is to be said of the corruption of manners. Every one who hath lived in sin, or is still subject to any considerable vice, as impurity, drunkenness, swearing, revenge, covetousness, ambition, and other like saults, ought not to believe himself sit, or called by God to an ecclesiastical life, except he hath corrected his former manners by a long penance, and hath entirely mortisted his passions, and conquered his bad inclinations by contrary virtues. This truth belongs to the preparation of which we are going to speak.

ARTICLE III.

Of the preparation necessary for an ecclesiastical state.

PReparation is the third thing you have to confider in deliberating on an ecclefiastical state, and so much more necessary, as it frequently happens, that they who aspire to this state do not think themselves obliged to be

There must be a preparation to an ecclesiastical state, by a wirtuous and holy life.

prepared for it a long time before by a virtuous and holy life. This is an error so much the more to be deplored, as it is very common, and the reason why ecclesiasticks dishonour their state by their life, because engaging themselves therein without this preparation, it is no wonder if they lead as they did before, a worldly, and oftentimes a most vicious life.

Proofs of this truth.

1. By the sanctity of the state. To disabuse you, Theotime, of this error, it is sufficient to represent unto you the fanctity of that state: for if it be so holy and sublime, it is an infallible consequence, that you must prepare yourself for it by a holy life; and to enter into orders with a soul still subject unto sin, and full of vicious

habits, is to contemn it, and to offer a most heinous injury to it: it is to put yourself in a most evident danger of dishonouring it by a life unworthy of it, and contrary to the fanctity it requires, and to meet with inevitable perdition.

But to convince you absolutely of the necessity of this preparation, I shall give you here the sentiment of the fathers, and of the church herself

upon this subject.

St. Gregory the great fays, (lib. 7. epist. 182.) that we must ascend unto orders by order; for he seeks a ruin and precipice, who desiring to mount up to a high place, leaves the ordinary degrees to ascend by rough and craggy ways. And he adds an excellent comparison: For as timber is not proper to be employed in building when it is yet green, and newly come out of the forest, except it be dry'd and season'd a long time; otherwise it rather serves to ruin the building than support it. Thus they ought not to be advanced to sacred orders, who have lately been engaged in sin, except all their wicked habits have been corrected by a long and serious penance.

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St. Jerome (Epist. 1.) speaking of an ecclesiastical state, says, Wo be to him who enters therein without the nuptial robe of santity. He further adds, Let every one examine and prove himself, and not approach before that trial. Ecclesiastical dignity doth not make a Christian nor a virtuous man, such an one as an ecclesiastick ought to be.

St. Bernard, in many places of his works, is full of complaints and invectives against those who enter thus into orders, without bringing with them the preparation of a holy life experienced in virtue. He says, it is an insupportable impudence in those who do it, and that it is the source of all the disorders of eccle-

fiafticks. De Con. ad Cler. c. 10.

St. Thomas establisheth this difference between sacred orders and a religious state, that to enter into religion it is not necessary to be exercised before-hand in virtue; but to enter into orders it is required: and he brings this reason, Because, says he, sacred orders require a previous sanstity, which the state of religion does not, which is an exercise instituted to attain unto sanstity. 2. 2. qu. 180. ar. 1.

All these authorities are clear, and admit of no reply. Give ear to that of the whole church speaking

in the council of Trent.

The facred council, after it had determined the age wherein one might receive holy orders, adds, (Seff. 25. c. 12.) that all those are not capable of orders who have attained to that age, but only those who are worthy of it, and whose approved life is a certain old age; that is, they should make amends for their age by the wisdom of their life, and sanctity of their manners, according to that maxim of the wise man, which says, that the gray bairs of a man consists in wisdom, and in a holy and immaculate life. Wisd. iv.

After all these authorities there is no reason to doubt of the necessity of this preparation to an eccle-siastical state, but rather to be both assonished and

forry to fee it so ill observed. Be not guilty, Theotime, of this fault; but if you aim at an ecclefiaftical flate, use all endeavours to prepare, and render your. felf worthy, to which end observe the following article.

ARTICLE IV.

The conclusion of the precedent chapter.

THESE are the principal things which he, who aspires to an ecclesiastical state, ought attentively to consider.

What is to be done in deliberating on an ecclesiastical life.

If then you deliberate on this calling, fee what you have to do. Practife all that we have faid in the fixth chapter, take a reasonable time for this deliberation, and during that time, 1. Pray much, confess and communicate often. 2. Read and meditate atten-

tively what we have faid concerning the ecclefiaftical state: weigh well the greatness and holiness of that calling, to conceive a high efteem of it; its obligations, to see whether you can acquit yourself of them; and its dangers, to avoid them: examine diligently, and without flattering yourself, what motive leads you to this state, what dispositions you have for it, and whether you have nothing in you which may be contrary to it. 3. Confer often with some wise and virtuous ecclesiastick, who knows how to inform you of all you ought to confider in that calling, and difcover whether you have requisite dispositions for it.

What is to be done after the resolution.

If after a long deliberation you believe you ought to embrace that state, resolve to dispose yourself for it as you ought, that is, by a holy and virtuous life, and by a ferious study of the

knowledge requifite for you. And as foon as you are

fix'd

fix'd upon your resolution, apply yourself seriously to

these two things.

1. Addict yourself entirely to piety, 1. He must fly fin, labour to mortify your passions, prepare bimself to correct your irregular inclinations, by a boly life. to attain the Christian virtues of chas-

tity, modesty, simplicity, and the contempt of the world: fly the spirit of the world and worldly converfation, frequent the facraments, read pious books, and above all the New Testament, and books which treat of the obligations of an ecclefiaftical state, which the holy fathers have left us, as the offices of St. Ambrofe, the epiftle of St. Ferome to Nepotian of the life of clergymen, the pattoral of St. Gregory, the declamations of St. Bernard, alias De contemptu mundi ad Clericos, his books De Conversione ad Clericos, his books De Consideratione, and other works on this subject, as well ancient as modern. Have fre-

quently before your eyes that remark- A remarkable able advice which St. Ferome gave to advice.

Rusticus a monk, who aspir'd to an ec-

clefiastical state; Live so bolily in your monastery, fays he to him, (Ep. ad Rust.) that you may deserve to be of the clergy, and not defiling your youth by sin, you may approach to the altar of Jesus Christ in a perfect purity. Meditate well upon this advice, Theotime, confider it often, and conceive it spoken to yourself, and certainly with much more reason; for, if a young religious, living in the observance of a monastick rule, must labour to make himself worthy of an ecclesiastick state by a holy life, how much more care and pains ought you to take, who live in the world, where you have not the advantages of a regular life?

2. When you prepare yourself for an ecclefiastical state by a virtuous life, 2. By the study of remember to join with the exercises of piety, diligent application, and continual study, to make yourself capable

sciences necessary for an ecclesiastick.

to ferve God in that calling. This labour is no less necessary for an ecclesiastical state than that of sanctity. You are obliged to it in conscience, and if you apply not yourself carefully to it, you render yourself unworthy of that calling: For God will reject from his priestbood, bim who bath rejetted science. Hos. iv. And moreover, you make yourself guilty in the fight of God, of all the mischiefs which happen thro' your ignorance.

The great evils which the ignorance of priests.

The ignorance of priefts is the greatest evil that can be found in the church, it being the chiefest cause of spring from the corruption of the people, and loss of fouls. It is impossible but that an ignorant ecclefiaftick should be slothful and idle, not being able to apply him-

felf to his studies, and that idleness should lead him in-Now altho' he should not be to vice, as we daily fee. vicious, idleness alone is criminal in a priest. Add the mischiefs which the ignorance of ecclesiasticks causes in respect of the people: for it either hinders them from labouring for the falvation of fouls, or doing it effectually (from whence the people fuffer much, lofing the affistance they ought to receive from them for their eternal falvation) or occasions the loss of many souls by their not being instructed in what appertains to falvation, and the way that leads to it. It is not to be conceiv'd how many fouls are loft by the ignorance of priefts. The church (fays St. Bernard, in Declam.) bath daily a great and lamentable experience of the danger souls are exposed unto, when the pastor wants wherewith to feed bis sheep, when the guide knows not the way by which be should conduct them to salvation, nor the servant the will of his master, which he ought to declare to others.

O my dear Theotime, reflect well upon these truths, and be afraid, left by your ignorance you make yourfelf the cause of the ruin of souls redeem'd by the blood of Jesus Christ. Addict yourself seriously to the study necessary for an ecclesiastick, and endeavour

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to make yourself the most capable you can of serving God in the state to which he hath called you.

In fine, whether in deliberating on this state, or preparing yourself for it, An important set frequently before your eyes those advice.

excellent words of St. Augustin, writing to a friend of his, who demanded of him counfel concerning an ecclefiaftical state. I entreat you, fays he, before all things, that in your virtuous wisdom you will confider well that there is nothing in this life, and principally at this time, more easy, more light, and more acceptable to men, than the charge of a bishop, of a priest, or of a deacon, if negligently or flatteringly it be discharged; yet there is nothing more miserable, more dreadful, and more damnable in the fight of God. Besides, there is nothing in this life, and at this time, more difficult, more painful, and more dangerous, than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon, if they acquit themselves of it as they ought, and according to the will of our master; as also there is nothing more happy in the fight of God. Ep. 184.

make me of to deliberate on it, and to know whether he be celled to it. X .. A. A. HwD thall treat of in

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polypolich souls and Of a religious state.

FTER the ecclefiaftical flate I come to the religious, the choice whereof is of no less confequence than that of the former, nor subject to less faults.

The state of a religious man is excellent, who having forfaken all things, has no other care than to please God by the practice of penance and humility, living in the exact observance of his rule, and keeping himself retir'd from the commerce of the world, that the may addict himself entirely to the study of real and folid perfection.

But on the contrary, it is fad and deplorable, when a religious, who is only so in habit, and making particular profession of perfection, is farther from it than the most imperfect layman; loving the world, and worldly things, subject even to the greatest vices; or having overcome corporal vices, as impurity, gluttony, and the like, permits himself to be carried away by spiritual fin, as anger, pride, ambition, envy, discord, enmity, and other like, which are by so much more dangerous, as they are less sensible. I omit to speak of those, who being enter'd too easily into religion, and without a vocation from God, repent themselves afterwards for being too lightly engaged in a business of such importance. A repentance which frequently leads them into great disorders, and fometimes even apostacy.

Two things to be considered in a religious

life.

To make a good choice of this state, two things are necessary, 1. To know it well; that is to fay, to understand what it is, its obligations, its advantages, and its dangers. be instructed well in the means he must

make use of to deliberate on it, and to know whether he be called to it. This is what we shall treat of in the three following articles.

ARTICLE I.

What a religious state is; what its obligations, its advantages, and dangers are.

Religious life (according to St. Thomas) is a means instituted to acquire santtity. Not an exterior fanctity, which appears in the habit, and exterior actions of piety, but in an interior holiness, which confists in the fanctification of the foul; which is effected by the mortification of the passions, by the abridgment of disorderly passions, and all inclinations clinations to creatures and felf-love, by a strict union with God thro' charity. For this end do they leave the world, that with less hindrance, and more freedom they may apply themselves to these exercises. For this do they renounce all worldly goods and pleafures, not only in affection, as all Christians are obliged to renounce them; but also in effect, that they may more perfectly give themselves to God. And lastly, to acquire this interior sanctity, they practise austerities, obedience, and all the rules of religion, which are made only for that end.

The obligations of this kind of Itsobligations.

life are great; for it obliges to ob-

ferve an exact chastity, a perfect poverty, removed not only from the possession of any goods, but from all affection to earthly things, with an entire renunciation of their proper will to follow that of their superiors. Besides, they are obliged to comply exactly with their rule, and to sanctify themselves interiorly by the practice of Christian virtues, of which we have already spoken.

As the obligations of this state are Its advan-

ftrict, there are also singular advan- tages, which St. Bernard handles in

one of his fermons, where he fays, that in religion a man lives more purely, is raised more readily, walks more cautiously, is more frequently refresh'd with divine grace, reposes with more security, dies with less fear, is sooner purged in the other life, and more abundantly recompenced in heaven. But this is to be understood, as he himself says, of a holy, pure, and immaculate religious state, that is observed holily, wherein they labour solidly for interior sanctity, as has been said.

This state hath no small dangers as well as great advantages; the same St. Bernard reduces them to

three.

The first danger is of falling into pride, and a good opinion of one's self, which creeps so easily and in-

fenfibly into pious actions, whose merit it greatly diminisheth, and many times absolutely ruins.

The second is, the danger of looking back to return unto the world, either in effect, or by affection

and defire.

The third is, of growing negligent in the exercise of a religious life. It is a way, as the same saint says, wherein one thust necessarily either advance, or retire; and if a man grows slack, he falls into disorder, which makes him in the habit of religion and piety lead a worldly life full of vices, and which is by so much more dangerous, being really wicked, yet bears

the appearance of virtue.

The first of these dangers ordinarily springs from this, that men judge of sanctity by the exterior, and esteem themselves such as they seem in appearance, not resecting that sanctity consists in the virtues of the soul, and chiefly in the practice of a solid and perfect humility. The second and third arise most frequently from conversing with the world, which is infinitely dangerous for religious persons, as S. Bernard says, and all three together proceed from the want of a true vocation to religion. Serm. 66.

These, Theotime, are the principal things you ought to consider, if you deliberate on a religious calling: now to the end you may proceed with greater safety in this deliberation, I shall tell you the order you must observe therein, and what you must do to

know whether you are called to it.

as he himfelf fayt. Af 1 1 1 1 1 And religious thate, that is oblerved holily.

What is to be done to know whether one be called to a

IRST, if you perceive in yourfelf a strong motion to that state, have a ccare not storie est it, because pethaps it is a vocation from God conormation to embrace it suddenly, fince it may be only a hu-

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man motion. You must examine whether it is God who speaks interiorly to you; for if it is, you must hear and follow him whither he calls you; if it is God Examine allo whether vinite mineral boo

But how should I know that? you will fay! fee the means. Take a good space of time to apply yourfelf to this important affair, and during that time practife exactly four things run Inooni bas a ortholding

1. Refrain from any conversation with those who would move or excite you to be a religious. The reafor is very manifelt; for as long as you are forcited to it, you will not know how to difcern whether the inclination you have comes from the inspiration of God, or the perfusion of men. And although God may fometimes employ men in communicating his inspirations; nevertheless, as that does not always happen, in order to know if fuch a motion comes from God, the most affored means is, for fome time, to hearken to God alone, and attend to what he shall fay to your foul, according to the example of the prophet; I will liften to the voice of the Lord within me. derflanding one; difcover all your interior vixxxi laff

Beg daily of God, with great earnestness, that he would be pleased to make his will known to you, and confirm you in this motion if it come from him, or take it away if it comes not from him. Say to him as St. Peter did, Lord, if it be thou who speakest, command me to come to thee, Matth. xiv. Declare that you are ready to hearken to him as young Samuel, Speak, Lord, for thy fervant bears thee; I Kings in. and fay with St. Paul, Lord, what witt thou have me to believe that your infpiration comes frexi &BA. Sob

3. Examine diligently, 1. The obligation and that tions, advantages, and dangers of a re-ligious life, of which we have spoken ter into religion. above. 2. The intention you bring the of nov and

to this state. The intention must be to withdraw yourfelf from the world to do penance, and to be fanctified interiorly by the practice of Christian virtues.

whether this be your motive; think often on it seriously without flattering yourself; for if another motive incline you to that calling, your design is not from God. Examine also whether you are fit for it, and whether you have nothing that is incompatible with that condition, be it in body or mind. Corporal infirmities, and bad qualities of the mind, but chiefly all lightness and inconstancy, render a man unapt for

that calling.

4. Above all things refolve not on your own head, and without taking good advice. It is a very common fault among young people, many whereof throw themselves into religion without any other counsel than that of their own mind, and those persons who receive them too easily: from whence it often happens that they are obliged to go out, or, ashamed to change, they badly and without vocation engage themselves therein. Act not so, Theotime, but declare your defign to some prudent person, and particularly to your ghoftly father; and if you have not an ordinary one, choose a virtuous, discreet, and understanding one; discover all your interior thoughts to him, and hearken humbly to his advice. Confult likewise with some prudent and disinterested person, as we faid above.

When you have done thus for a good space of time, that is, at least for fix months, or a year; if the intention you have to be a religious, continue still, and your intention also be such as it ought to be, that is, pure and holy, and that you have convenient dispositions of mind and body for that state, you have reason to believe that your inspiration comes from God, and that he calls you to religion; but if this inclination continues not, it is a sign that it was only a human motion, or a pious thought inspired by God, for inciting you to virtue in the state you fix upon.

Some may fay, that you ought readily to put in execution the inspirations from God, and that to delay the

performance

in Christian Piety.

performance a long time, is to put one's felf in danger of losing them, according to that maxim of St. Ambrose, which says, that the grace of the Holy Ghost

approves not of flow endeavours.

I answer, that it is true, when you sufficiently know that the inspiration comes from God; but before you can have that knowledge, you not only do well to defer, but you ought to delay, principally in affairs of consequence. Now to come to this knowledge you must take time to consider maturely: and in a word, to do thus, is not to be wanting to our fidelity, and trust in the grace of God, but to practife faithfully the maxim of the Holy Ghost himself, who commands us not to believe every spirit, but to try whether they come from God. This is not to put one's felf in danger of lofing one's vocation, but to comply with one's duty, to know the truth of it by fufficient marks, to embrace it more zealoufly, and to execute it with more fidelity. In fine, that you may be more convinced of this maxim against the oppositions you may find therein, I shall add to it another particular article.

ARTICLE III.

That a man must take time to know whether he be called to religion.

I F God gave us always certain and undoubted marks of his inspiration for great enterprizes, questionless we should not take time to deliberate on them, nor to put them in execution; but because he is not pleased usually to deal with us in this manner, and admonisheth us by the apostle, (1 John iv.) Not to give credit to every spirit, but to try whether they come from bim, adding in another place, that the spirit of darkness frequently transforms bimself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. There is no question but that it is

fo far from being a bad action to defer in this occafion, that it is a thing absolutely necessary and conformable to the order established by God, who would have us make use of means proper to know his will, and of the figns he hath given us, to discern the inspirations which come from his grace, from those which come not.

These means are the three we have already assign'd, a good life, prayer, and advice. A good life takes away the greatest obstatle to the grace of God, which is sin, and makes us more worthy of his lights. Prayer, when it is humble, fervent, and perseverant, makes us obtain them. And good counsel serves to direct us to know the will of God, and not take our

own inclination for a divine infpiration. Od 33d 13d 13d

When our Lord had moved Paul, and brought him to demand what he would have him do, he fends him to Andnias to learn his will from him. This holy main inspired by God, comes to seek this new convert, who was at prayer, an declared to him from God what he would have him do. This is a model of what you ought to do in this so important an occasion.

Permit your lelf to be moved by God for your conversion, and look upon it as your principal end; beg of him to know what his will is, that you should perform, to do penance: pray incessantly for this intent,

and take advice to learn what you must do.

As for the marks of a vocation, there are three, which are, humility, peace of mind, and perfeverance. By humility, I understand that virtue which makes us wholly distrust our own judgment in an affair of such importance, to follow that of wiser persons. By peace of mind, I mean a disposition to follow the will of God, on whatsoever side it may incline, when we shall sufficiently know it. By perseverance, I understand the long continuance of an inspiration, amidst the obstacles and difficulties which occur.

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These are the three most ordinary marks by which the spirit of God makes itself known to us; and if any of those be wanting, you have reason to doubt of your vocation; as on the contrary, if you have them all together, you have good cause to believe that God ealls you. If you are told, there is no need of deliberating to exactly about entring into religion, because there is a year of noviceship, to try their vocation by the marks and trials we have spoken of: I answer, that this would be true, if it were as easy to leave a religious order, as to enter into it; and if this going out did not draw after it so many bad consequences as ordinarily it doth. But because it frequently happens, that those who are entered into religion, are kept there thro fear of being accounted inconstant, for for fome other human confideration, which makes them engage unadvifedly, and without a vocation; or -chancing to depart from a convent, are looked upon by the world as inconstant, contemn'd as people fit for nothing; and what is yet worse, it happens often, that leaving the religious habit, they also forfake virtue, and lead a life very different from what they had begun in religion. For all these reasons I continue to fay, that a man must examine the vocation before he enters into religion; and for this intent take all the time that shall be necessary to be morally assured of

Act so then, Theotime, if you perceive yourself moved to religion, and be not asraid of losing your vocation, if you put it not suddenly in execution; for if you practise faithfully what we have said, with a sincere intention to know the will of God, you will not fail in the resolution you shall take; God will conduct you in that deliberation to the state he hath prepared for you; and if he call you to religion, he will confirm you in that desire by the perseverance he will give you, and perfect in you the good work he shall have begun; according to the expression of St. Paul,

330 The Instruction of Youth.

Qui capit in vos opus bonum, perficiet, confirmabit,

folidabitque.

After all, when you resolve to embrace a religious life, remember to prefer amongst the religious, those where a regular life is most exactly observed, and where they solidly labour to gain piety, and, as much as you can, where there is least communication with the world.

CHAP. XI.

Of the diverse states of a secular life.

As the life of ecclesiasticks and religious has its dangers, the secular life hath also its perils, which are not small; he who deliberates on it, ought necessarily to foresee them: and these dangers are different, according to the diverse states of that life. Wherefore I treat here of the principal callings of a secular life, to the end every one may examine that which he will embrace, and may know well its obligations.

ARTICLE I.

Of the condition of the great, and of those who govern others.

Maxims to be observed by those who go-vern others.

If there be a difficult and dangerous condition in the world, it is the office of those who are called to govern others; as kings and princes, who have sovereign authority; lords

of particular places, who have an inferior authority; magistrates and publick officers, who have an authority delegated to them by the prince. If then by your condition, or any other cause, you are designed for a state

state of government, you ought to arm yourself against the great difficulties, and innumerable dangers of that state, with wholsome Christian maxims, whereof these are the principal, which I beseech you

read attentively.

1. Have a care of giving access to the thoughts of pride or presumption, for seeing yourself raised above others: remember that by how much higher you are raised, by so much more have you reason to sear, according to that maxim of the scripture, By how much you are greater, bumble yourself in all things. Eccl. iii. Is authority conferred upon you? be not puffed up. Chap. xxx.

2. Consider not your state as a happiness, but as a weighty charge; nor as a thing given you for your good, but for the benefit of others. Know, that those whom you command are not made for you, but you for them: they owe respect and obedience to you, and you owe to them things that are far more difficult, that is, care, assistance, preservation, and

justice.

3. Believe firmly, that how great power soever you have, you hold it from God, and that you are his minister and his servant for the government of men, and by consequence, that you ought to govern according to his will, and must give him an exact account of your conduct.

4. Place frequently before your eyes that dreadful truth of the facred scripture, A rigorous judgment

shall they have who rule. Wisd. vi. 6, 7.

Now there are two things you ought to have a care of in your condition; the first, to live well; the second, to govern well.

Governors ought to have a care of two things.

As for the first, you must live like 1. To live well.

a virtuous man, governing your pas-

fions, having the law of God for the rule of your actions, confidering that it is a shameful thing to go-

vern others, and to be ignorant of governing one's felf; to command men, and to be a fervant and flave to one's own passions and the devil.

You are obliged to it by the rank you bear, for you hold the place of God; you ought to imitate his fanctity, as you represent his person in power and authority.

You are also obliged to it for the benefit of your inferiors, who cannot but be miserable when they are governed by a wicked man. The people shall rejoice, says the wise man, in the multiplication of the just, but will lament when the wicked hold the government. Prov. xxix.

For this reason, in the ancient law, God had commanded that the king (and it ought to be understood of all those who command) should always have with him the book of the law, and should read it daily, To the end, says he, be may learn to fear the Lord his God, and observe his words, and the ceremonies which are there commanded. Deut. xvii.

Moreover, your example will much influence your inferiors; if you be good, they will imitate your virtue; if you be vicious, they will take the liberty to be wicked, according to the maxim of the wife man, As the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers. The inhabitants of a city conform themselves to him who governs them. Eccl. x. By your example you will occasion much good, or much mischief, and you will be guilty in the fight of God of all the sins others shall commit by your example.

Aremarkable boam king of Israel: this man being raised to the government of the ten tribes of Israel, had no sooner the au-

thority in his hand, but he wickedly abused it, abandoning the service of the true God to adore idols. His example had so great a force, that he not only drew after him all that great people he commanded,

who

who became idolaters like him, but also made that sin of idolatry hold on its course in all his successors during the space of two hundred years and more; and the sacred scripture has such a horror for the mischief this missortunate prince caused by his example, that almost every time it speaks of him, it says, He who sinned, and made Israel to sin: 3 Kings xiv. And speaking of each of his successors, it says, They followed the way of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin; Chap. xvi. and xvii. Reproaching and shewing a perpetual detestation of the sin of that wicked prince, by reason of the dreadful consequence of his ill example.

As to the second concern you ought to have, which is to govern well, remember that those who govern bear the image of God, governing visibly inferiors by their conduct, as he governs invisibly all things by his providence. If you be his image, you ought to endeavour to resemble him: and as he governs not only by exercising his power, but also his wisdom, his goodness, and his justice, you must also exercise your authority with these qualities, performing nothing but with much wisdom, treating your inferiors with a fatherly goodness, and doing justice to every one. Authority exercised without wisdom is brutishness; without goodness, tyranny, and without justice, robbery.

You must employ your authority and power chiefly to preserve religion, What he must to advance the honour of God, de- do to govern stroy vice, exterminate the wicked, and well.

those who are subject to you; that is the principal end for which all temporal power is established by God; and if you be defective in that, he in his judgment will exact a most strict account for it. St. Auslin says, that the great ones ought to make their authority subservient to God, to extend and increase his honour and religion. Lib. 5. de Civ. c. 14.

Next to religion and piety, you must have a care of the temporal good of your inferiors, that is, of their quiet and security, and protection against the wicked. This is the second end for which God hath established you: for this reason give ear willingly to the complaints of the oppressed, and easy access to every one. It is a grievous evil among the great ones, that inferior persons cannot approach to them, to have recourse to their justice, as the scripture itself complains; They do not justice to orphans, and the cause of the widow enters not unto them, Isaiah i. Wait not till they complain; but inform yourself carefully of the disorders which reign among your inferiors, to the end you may apply a necessary remedy.

Governors
ought to avoid flatteries.

Permit not yourself to be cajol'd by flatteries, which pervert the mind of great ones, whose condition is most unhappy in this point; for they are scarce ever told the truth in the things they are obliged to know. Banish

flatterers far from you, and efteem them your greatest enemies, as in reality they are. Place frequently before your eyes that deplorable example of Joas king of Juda (2 Chron. xxiv.) who after he had spent many years in a holy life, was misfortunately perverted by the flattery of his courtiers, even to entirely defert, by their persuasion, the service of God, and fall into idolatry, the most heinous of all crimes. Conceive a horror for fuch persons. On the contrary, love those who tell you the truth, manifest an affection for those who admonish you, give them the liberty to do so. Make choice of one, or many persons for your confident friends, to whom give express charge to advertise you of things wherein you are defective, and of all they shall judge fitting; it is a thing which is wanting to all great ones, and to all those who are in office.

Beware of covetousness, and of that Covetousness.

infatiable defire of money, which is

the plague of great ones, and of those who govern, and which makes them commit a vast number of crimes: for from thence arise unjust actions, violences, oppressions of the innocent, unreasonable exactions, and a thousand other disorders, making the people groan under the injustice and tyranny of great ones, which God by his prophets so much detests.

Revenge also you ought very much to avoid: great ones permit them-Revenge.

selves many times to be carried away with it, by fo much more early as they have power in their hands, and frequently execute it under the pretence of justice, when it proceeds only from pasfion, in which they grossly deceive themselves; for justice only regards the publick good, or the amendment of him whom it punisheth; but revenge seeks its own proper satisfaction.

Yet in flying revenge and passion, Negligence in be careful of falling into another ex- punishing critreme, which is too much mildness, minals.

and remissiness in punishing crimes.

You are obliged to be exact in that, principally when they are against the publick good, and yet more when they injure religion; you must answer it before God if you be wanting therein.

Achab king of Israel having pardoned A remarkable the life of a wicked man, God fends example.

a prophet to him to tell him, that he

should answer foul for foul for it; Because thou bast dismissed a man wortby of death, thy life shall be put for bis; which menace punctually fell out: for after three years he was defeated in a battle, and killed by that very man whose life he had pardoned. 3 Kings xxix.

In fine, that you may know what it is to govern, I shall cite you here two very authentick pieces for the instruction of great ones, which I exhort you to consider attentively.

A notable adture, in the fixth chapter of Wisdom, wherein is contained this terrible admonition, which the Holy Ghost

gives to great ones: Hear, O you kings, and understand, O you judges of the earth; be attentive, you who govern the people, and delight in commanding. Authority is given you from God, and power from the most bigh, who will try your works, and fearch out your imaginations. Because being officers of his kingdom, you bave not judged aright, nor observed the law, nor walked after the will of God, horribly and suddenly will be appear unto you; for a bard judgment shall they have who bear rule. For he who is most low is worthy of mercy, but the mighty shall be mightily tormented. For God, who commands all things, shall spare no person, neither shall be fear any greatness, for be bath made the fmall and the great, and bath an equal care of all But for the mighty be hath reserved a forer trial; Wisd. vi. I would to God all those, who have any authority in the world, would read often this admonition.

The other authentick piece which I propose unto you, is in Book V. Chap. XIV. of the city of God, written by St. Austin, where he describes in this man-

ner the obligations of the great ones.

We esteem not Christian emperors happy, and the same in proportion is to be said of all great ones, because they command a long time; nor because being dead in peace, they have left after them children inheritors of their fortune; or because they conquer'd their enemies, foreign or domestick; for all these things, which appertain only to the favours and consolations of this miserable life, have been granted to Pagans, who have no part of the kingdom of God. And God acts thus by an effect of his mercy, that Christians may not desire of him these goods as their sovereign happiness. But we account

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account them happy if they govern justly; if they be not puffed up with pride and presumption in the midst of the high praises which are given them, and too low respect which is shewn them, but remember that they are mortal men; if they make their authority subservient to the majesty of God, to extend as much as they can his service and religion; if they fear, love, and honour God; if they affect more the eternal kingdom, where they shall not fear to have companions, than their mortal and perishable kingdom; if they proceed maturely to the punishment of crimes; if they pardon easily; if they inflict chastisement for the good government and preservation of the publick, and not to satisfy their particular batred or revenge; and if they consent to pardon upon the prospect of the amendment of the guilty, when there is hopes of it, and not thro' a neglett of punishing crimes; if they sweeten by benefits and mercy the sharpness they are obliged to observe in many occurrences; if they by so much the more abstain from pleasure and unlawful delights, as they have power and liberty to enjoy them; if they make more account of governing their passions, than having command over all the nations of the world; if they perform all these things, not for the desire of earthly glory, but for the love of life everlasting; if they bumble themselves before God, and if they have a care of offering him a sacrifice of prayer to obtain pardon for their fins: we say, that great ones, who live in this manner, are happy in this life by hope, as they shall be bereafter in effect.

ARTICLE II.

Of the officers of justice and magistracy.

LL that we have faid belongs also to judges and magistrates; but there are yet other obligations peculiar unto them, for which those who look up-Z

on themselves as designed for those charges ought

carefully to be prepared.

An important the former advices, which you ought advice. attentively to read, to put them in practice, because they concern you,

you shall carefully observe these which follow.

1. Place chiefly before your eyes that considerable advertisement which holy king Josaphat, king of Juda, gave to his judges. Have a care, said he to them, what you do; for it is not the judgment of man which you exercise, but of God: and what you shall judge shall fall upon you. Let the fear of God be with you, and perform all things with care and diligence. 2 Chron. i.

2. That you may practife this advice, have a care to study and understand your profession, and make yourself capable to perform well your office, without committing any faults therein. Remember that the possession, honour, and frequently the lives of men, depend upon your voice: if by your incapacity you commit any faults in judging these things, you are responsible for all the wrong your neighbour shall

fuffer by it.

3. Being capable of your charge, trust not so much to your ability, as ever to do any thing hastily, and without having well examined the cause you judge. I diligently examined (says the holy man Job) a cause which I was ignorant of. Rely not also on the judgment of your associates, nor much less on those under you. Know, that if you judge ill, either by ignorance, rashness, or the judgment of another, you are obliged to restitution of all the wrong you have caused by your decree. Observe this well, for there are few judges who reslect upon this truth.

4. Never permit yourself to be corrupted by prefents, which a judge ought to fly as from the plague. You shall not receive gifts, says the scripture, speak-

ing

ing to judges, because they blind the eyes of the wife, and pervert the words of the just, Deut. xxvi. Wo be to you who justify the wicked by your presents, and deprive the just of their right, Isaiah v. Nor also by threats, promises, or flatteries of men, nor by any perfuasion. A judge ought to be above all these things, and have an immoveable resolution never to commit injustice upon any account whatsoever, according to that excellent precept of the wife man, Engage for justice as much as for your life, and defend it even until death. Eccl. iv.

5. Have a care of being an acceptor of persons; it is an evil which eafily creeps into the minds of judges and magistrates, and causes them to commit many injustices. They give free access to the rich, they hearken favourably to them, dispatch their affairs, and favour them in all things: but the poor and mean can find no admittance to them; they are repulsed, their causes are neglected, and drawn out into extream delays, which often ruin them, or notably incommode them. These are the injustices which fpring from the acceptation of persons, and which God strictly prohibits to judges. Hearken, says he, to those whom you judge, and give sentence justly, whether he be a citizen or a stranger, there shall be no difference of persons. You shall hear the little as well as the great, and there shall be no acceptation of the person of any one, because this is the judgment of God. Deut. i.

6. Be resolute to resist evil, to oppose injustices and violences, which you see practised by the wicked, and chiefly by great ones: you are obliged to employ therein all that you rationally and piously can. Seek not to be a judge, says the wife man, if you have not sufficient courage stoutly to resist iniquities, lest perhaps fearing the face of a great one, you become wanting to your duty. Eccl. vii. God puts this compliance of judges with great ones, amongst the chiefest corrup-

tions of the earth, A prince requires, and the judge grants what he pleases. Mich. vii. Have a care of this fault, which makes judges and magistrates most culpable in the fight of God; and hold it for a maxim, that you should rather lose estate, and life itself, than comply with the will of great ones when they are unjust.

Hinder also, as much as you can, all cozening, wrangling, cheating, and injustices which are committed in law-suits by advocates, procurators, and

officers of justice.

7. Be just in punishing crimes, exterminating male-factors, and all those who disturb the publick quiet and security of the state, without excepting any one. Call to mind king *Achab*, of whom we have spoken in the former article.

8. Be a protector of the poor, of widows and orphans, and of all those who suffer injustice. You are obliged to it by your charge, and in performing this you will draw down upon you the divine benediction. Learn that excellent precept of the Holy Ghost himself, uttered by the mouth of the wise man, Deliver from the hands of the wicked him who suffers injustice, and perform it not with a regret, or, as the Greek hath it, be not remiss. In judging be as a father to orphans, and as a husband to their mother, taking upon you their protection; and in doing thus you shall be the child of God, executing his will, and he will bave more than a motherly bounty for you. Eccl. iv. O happy confolation for a judge, when in reality he may fay as the holy man Job, The publick voice gave testimony that he defended the poor and orphan, who cried to him for succour; when they had no one to belp them, be deliver'd bim who was persecuted, and comforted the heart of widows, and was a father of the poor. Job xxix.

9. Be careful not commit the crimes you punish. With what face can you punish a crime whereof you

are guilty? So many judgments as you give, so many times do you pronounce a sentence against yourself, which will serve for your condemnation at the divine judgment. There you shall be reproached for punishing thieves, you yourself having stolen the goods of another, in exacting what was not your due, in appropriating unjustly to yourself the goods which were taken by thieves, which you ought to have restored to the right owners; wherein you are more a robber than the thieves themselves; because being appointed to render to every one what belongs to him, you are the first who have violently taken his goods. And so of the rest.

In fine, Theotime, have a great care Four qualities of judging or governing others, except you have four qualities, which judges.

the facred scripture requires in those

who judge or govern; which are, wisdom, the fear of God, the love of justice, and the hatred of covetousness. These are the four conditions which the scripture points at in the wise counsel fethro gave to Moses, by which he advised him to choose wise men, fearing God, loving truth, that is, justice, and enemies of avarice, to govern the people of Israel. Exod. xviii.

These four qualities, with all that we have said of judges and magistrates, must proportionably be understood of lawyers and solicitors, of whom we shall speak hereafter, of all officers, and of all those who have publick charges.

ARTICLE III.

Of a court-life.

THIS life is full of dangers and The dangers of precipices, which are very dif-acourtier's life. ficult to be avoided by those who

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are engaged therein. Ordinary virtues are eafily there corrupted, the most folid are there shaken, and it is very difficult not to perish in it. It is a life wherein pride, ambition, vanity, idleness, excess, intemperance, an inordinate love of pleasures, an insatiable covetousness of the goods of the world do apparently reign. If there be any religion, it is only in outward shew, every one makes fo much appear as is necessary to attain his ends. Solid virtue is there contemn'd, mocked, and many times persecuted. An insatiable defire of growing great possesses the minds of all. Every one thinks of nothing but his interest and fortune. From thence fpring the flattering of great ones, a base compliance with all the world, unworthy fubmission, false friendships, distimulation, which shews a pleasing countenance to those whom they hate in their heart. From thence envy, cozening, cheats, malicious intrigues, unjust means to supplant others, and to advance themfelves at their expence. From thence irreconcilable enmities, revenge, and many dreadful accidents take their rife.

If things be so, you will say, how can one be saved in this condition? And what must they do who see themselves entangled in that state? I answer, that althorsalvation be not absolutely impossible in that condition, yet it is very difficult, and those who see themselves like to be engaged therein, ought to stand in great fear, and arm themselves with great precaution against the dangers of that life. See here what you must bring with you, if necessity, birth, or any post determines you to that state.

The first precaution is, to bring 1. Precaution. thither a mind fully convinced of the vanity of earthly things, of greatness, of riches, of pleasures; all these things pass, and you shall pass with them, but eternity shall never pass.

The

The second is, to bring with you a 2. Precaution. moderation of mind as to the desire of preferring yourself, and advancing your fortune; confine yourself to your condition, and as for the rest, make account that the great fortune you are to raise, is to procure your salvation. What doth it prosit a man, says the Son of God, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? To be happy for a short time, and miserable for all eternity? O what an admirable fortune is that, Theotime, to gain heaven!

The third is, to make a firm resolution to live like a true Christian, and 3. Precaution.

never to offend God upon any ac-

count whatsoever. Renew often this resolution, and demand of God daily the grace to observe it faithfully.

The fourth is, to carry yourself 4. Precaution.

wisely in all your actions, offend no one, be circumspect, civil, ready to offer your service, to oblige all that you can, and that not out of a wordly compliance, nor policy, but out of charity. Take no notice of many things which shall be said or done. Give not credit easily to reports which are spread abroad, generally salse, or upon some ill design. Have a care of the friendships you contract, lest it should be with a person whose example or conversation might change your mind, and withdraw you from the path of virtue, which is much to be feared at court.

In fine, as this state is full of dangers, you have need of arming yourself strongly by frequent and daily prayer, by frequenting the sacraments, by the counsel of a wise person, by the reading of pious books, and by the example of those who lived holily in the court of princes, or those who yet lead there virtuous lives.

ARTICLE IV.

Of the profession of arms.

THIS condition is no less dangerous than the former, and abounding with as many obstacles to salvation, It is good in itself, it being necessary for the safety of the realm against the violences of strangers, and for the defence of religion against her enemies; but it is become so corrupted, that it is al-

most impossible to be faved therein.

Amongst the vices which reign in this profession, there are five very common, and very enormous. The first is, a great irreligion, which makes them contemn the service of God and their own salvation. And this irreligion frequently extends itself to impiety and atheism. The second, an execrable custom of swearing and blaspheming. The third, an unbridled impurity, which reigns in that calling more than any other. The fourth, a madness of duelling, which miserably facrisices to the devil and eternal slames a vast number of that profession. The fifth consists in rapine, unjust exactions, violences, and ill treating those who cannot resist.

It is a most difficult thing to be of that profession, and not to fall into these vices: the wisest and most virtuous learn them sooner or later, and are corrupted

at last by the example or persuasion of others.

O Theotime, if any inevitable obligation drives you into that state, know, that you cannot sufficiently apprehend your danger; and if you will avoid your eternal ruin, you have need of arming yourself powerfully against these enemies, and dangers which environ you.

1. Embrace not that calling but with reason, and for a good cause; as because your birth obliges you thereto, or for the benefit of the publick, or other

good

good, reason and not thro' caprice and licentiousness, for idleness and sloth, for a desire of raising your fortune, nor much less to enrich yourself by spoils, robberies, and extortions. These are the most ordinary motives of those who cast themselves into that condition, and the first fountain of the evils we see therein.

2. Make a resolution to live like a virtuous man, fearing God, flying the particular vices of that profession, not concerning yourself for what others shall say of you; they will cause you some trouble in the beginning, but at the end you will get above them.

3. Place not bravery and courage in appearing valiant, in suffering nothing from any person, in fighting upon all occasions, but in serving faithfully and couragiously your prince and country in all occur-

rences.

4. Arm yourfelf against the tyranny of duels, by a firm resolution never to fight one; a resolution, without which you can never be in the state of grace, but in a perpetual state of mortal sin and damnation. Ought not this fole thought to raife in you a horror for duels? Altho' you perform all the good imaginable, altho' you lead a life as holy as the greatest faint, except you have this resolution of not fighting a duel, you are not in a state of falvation: all your confessions are facrileges and abominations in the fight of God, because you still continue in a will to offend him mortally; even that which you shall make at the hour of death, if you have time to make it, will avail you nothing; for never having had this refolution during your whole life, it is almost impossible you should have a true and sincere one at the hour of your death.

I could bring many powerful reafons against this madness of duels. against duels.

A duel is not an action of courage;

courage confifts in exposing one's life for the publick good, in defending one's self when assaulted: now in

a duel you expose your life without necessity, for a displeasure, for a revenge, which no man is allowed; oftentimes for pure folly and childishness, sometimes to please another, who requests that service of you. that is, to facrifice your life, and damn your foul for his quarrel. Now you expose therein your life, which is not yours, but belongs to God and the publick. The honour which is pretended to be forfeited by avoiding or refusing a duel, is an imaginary honour, there being none but worldly and wicked persons who condemn this refusal, which is praised and approved by wife and good people. All discreet men detest duels, and none but the wicked approve them. The law punishes them as contrary to the publick good. Your prince, to whom you owe obedience, forbids them. The church detests and condemns them; she excommunicates all those who fight duels, or contribute any thing to them; she deprives of ecclefiaftical burying all those who die in that combat.

Without stopping to treat at large Two strong these most powerful reasons, I shall reasons against

content myself to make you consider duels.

two things. 1. That a duel is a crime

in the fight of God. 2. That it is incompatible with

your falvation.

It is a crime as great, as murder is enormous. Remember how murder is detested by God: it is a crime which destroys the image of God, and the workmanship of his hands; God hath such a horror for it, that he would not have him pardoned who is guilty of it. Whosever, says he, sheds buman blood, his blood shall be shed, being man is made to the image of God. Gen. ix. He threatens to extend his revenge thereof even to beasts, which had taken away man's life, to manifest what a horror he had for murder. By this judge of the quality of a duel, by which you go to spill the blood of your brother, destroy the image of God, and, what is yet more horrible, to ruin for

ever the soul of your adversary, or your own, for each of which Jesus Christ hath died: or if such mischiefs should not happen, you expose yourself to evident danger of falling into them, and so you are as criminal in the sight of God as if the effect succeeded. Consider that this blood, which you shall have shed, will cry to God for vengeance against you, as that of Abel against Cain; that the soul which you have destroyed will curse you eternally; that your conscience will continually reproach you for your crime, and will cause particular disturbances, terrors, and apprehensions of the divine judgment and vengeance, which you shall never escape either in this world, or in the next.

From hence follows the second truth which I have proposed to you, viz. that a duel is incompatible with salvation. Where by a duel I understand not the actual fighting, but the will of duelling; because the will to commit a crime, is directly opposite to salvation. You must then either renounce duels, or your salvation; consider which you will renounce. This is very hard, you will say: 'tis true, but it is necessary. It is difficult principally in the corruption of the times; but your salvation is concerned. It is hard in the beginning, but in time, and by the grace of God, it becomes easy. In a word, Theotime, you will conquer the difficulty, if you will apply yourself seriously to it, and make use of the following means.

1. Demand of God the grace to renounce from your heart that tyranny, and never to yield to it.

2. Be convinced of the nature of a duel, that a duel is a wicked action, base and ill-judged, forbidden by God, detested by the church, contrary to the publick good, an enemy to salvation, a madness; the tyranny of a detestable custom, and invention of the devil, to destroy souls by the bloody death of the body, as the council of Trent speaks. Self. 25.

3. Call

3. Call to mind those of your acquaintance who died in duels, and are lost for ever: judge what they think now of duels, and what renunciations they would make of them, if they could return into the world; but there is no more time for them. What,

if you were one of those!

4. When any one shall challenge you, answer him aloud, that you will not fight, a duel being forbidden both by divine and human laws. If any one accuse you of cowardise, tell him, that you know well how to shew your courage on proper occasions, for the service of your prince and country. If he threaten to assault you wheresoever he shall find you, answer, that you will defend yourself, but make no appointment either directly or indirectly, saying, I pass by such a place, or the like. If after this he attack you, defend yourself.

5. Avoid the causes of duels, as quarrels and enmities. Offend no person; or if by imprudence, or otherwise, you wrong any one, make him amends, and declare you had no intention to offend him. This

is what concerns duels.

As for what remains towards the regulating your life, be no swearer, and blasphemer as others. See what we have said of oaths, Part IV. Chap. XII. Fly impurity like death, there is nothing more unworthy of a generous soul; and besides, it is the source of all the missortunes which befall those of your profession. See what hath been said of this vice, Part III.

Chap. VIII.

Hinder disorders, as duels, blasphemies, injustices, robberies, vexations, violences, sacrileges, and all other mischiefs which soldiers may commit: you are obliged to it when you can, and chiefly if you have command. You shall answer to God for all the disorders which shall be acted under you, if you have not used all your endeavours to prevent them. And you are obliged to make restitution for all the damage

which

which is done to others by your fault. Have a care of ever commanding any injustice, or even to put in execution the commands of others which you clearly fee to be unjust.

Be affifting to the afflicted, protect the poor, and

all those who suffer violence or injustice.

Be not infolent in victory, nor cruel towards the conquered, but mild and favourable as much as prudence will permit, following that maxim of St. Augustin, who fays, (Ep. 205.) that as force is used towards the enemy who resists, so mercy ought to be shewn to him who is overcome, when he is no more in a condition to hurt.

Examine often your conscience, to keep yourself still in a good state; confess frequently, beg of God daily that he would give you grace to avoid the dangers of your state and condition, reslecting often on

them to that end.

ARTICLE V.

Of other conditions of a secular life.

THE four conditions whereof we have spoken, are the most difficult and dangerous of a secular life; for this reason we were obliged to handle them more at large. Others also have their difficulties and dangers, which are necessary to be foreseen when one deliberates on them, to be prepared to surmount them; I shall here only run over the most considerable.

Counsellors and solicitors are to avoid ignorance in their profession, rashness in affairs, undertaking the defence of bad causes, that are either unjust or ill grounded, advising a suit in doubtful affairs, answering according to the affection of the parties, rendering all businesses probable, making use of cheats, surprizes, cozening, falsity, injustices, detraction of their neighbour

neighbour in defending themselves, accusing him falfely, revealing what is fecret when it doth not appertain to the cause, making invectives, offering all forts of injuries, wherein they give themselves an incredible licence, as if it were permitted to violate charity to preserve one's right; making their clients suffer by delays and negligences, prolonging unjustly the fuits to weary out the poor adversary, and put them into an incapacity of pursuing their just right, pronouncing unjust judgments, exacting more than they ought for their fees, and particularly of poor and mean people; following poor men's businesses negligently, continuing the fuits which might eafily be ended, animating parties one against another, fomenting divisions and enmities, and having with these bufinesses their minds so much employed, that they never, or very rarely think of God or their falvation, which is too common among those of their profession, who often revolve in their thoughts every thing except themselves, and who following the temporal affairs of their neighbour, neglect the most important affair of their own falvation.

Physicians, who are of a necessary profession for the life and preservation of men, must avoid being ignorant in their science, rash in their advice, negligent in knowing exactly the distempers they meddle with, and studying the remedies; too confident in their own sufficiency, little careful of the salvation of their patients, not admonishing them in good time to set in order their conscience, which is the cause why many die in a bad state thro' the physician's fault; too easy in giving their patients certificates for being dispensed with as to fasting; too free in attributing much to nature, and little to God, who is the author of nature, and other like things. I add the dangers of chastity, to which they are often exposed, by reason of the necessity they have of treating objects which may excite impurity, which is a reason why they they should have a great precaution against this vice.

Tradesmen ought to avoid covetousness, or the excessive desire of gain or riches, which totally possesses their mind, deceits, disguising or falsifying merchandizes, breaking their word, unjust and excessive gain, usury, and other disorders. The same in proportion is to be said of artificers and other professions, which have relation to or combination with the former.

Thus in every profession there are vices and dangers, which must be known before one enters into them, that they may beware of them, because without this precaution they follow the great road of others, are engaged in the abuses of their profession, and by these abuses in the ruin of their salvation.

CHAP. XII.

Of the state of marriage.

TATHEN you are entered into one of the former employments of a civil life, you must settle in the world, which ordinarily is performed by marriage, and fometimes, tho' more rarely, in an unmarried life. I spoke nothing of these states in the first impressions of this book, but after I made reflection of it, when I reviewed it for this edition, I conceived it very proper to speak to you of them, and give you some necessary advices, to make you avoid a great number of most important faults which men are accustomed to fall into, in the choice of these two states, which draw after them an infinite number of miseries, and frequently eternal damnation. To perform this profitably I shall follow the method I have already observed for the ecclesiastical and religious state. I shall treat of two things concerning these two states. 1. What we must consider to know them

well. 2. The dispositions necessary to enter well into that state, and acquit ourselves worthily in it.

ARTICLE I.

What we must know of a married life.

THERE are four things to be known of this state; its holiness, its obligations, its advan-

tages, and its dangers.

I say first, that this state is holy, it having been instituted and sanctified by God himself from the beginning of the world, and fince raifed to the dignity of a facrament by his Son Jesus Christ, to fanctify the persons that would enter into it, and to confer on them graces necessary to acquit themselves worthily Thus this state is holy every way, by its auof it. thor who is God, by the dignity of the facrament which is annexed to it, by the fanctifying grace which it augments in those who duly receive it, by the favours and affiftances it affords them in their necessities; and in fine, by the excellent fignification of the union of Jesus Christ with the church his spouse, which made St. Paul give it the name of a great facrament. Ephes. v.

Secondly, the holiness of this state brings with it great obligations, whereof the first is, to enter into it holily, that is, with the requisite dispositions, which we shall speak of hereafter. The second is, to lead a holy and truly Christian life, in the fear of God, and in the observation of his commandments, as it is said of the father and mother of St. John, Luke i. to observe an inviolable sidelity to his consort, to use moderately lawful pleasures, and to refrain from those that are forbidden, to educate their children in the fear of God, provide for their necessities, to have a care of their temporal settlement, and much more of

their eternal falvation.

Thirdly, The advantages of this state for salvation are not so great as those of the ecclesiastical or religious life; it is also true, that it requires not so high a perfection: and if there be any advantage above those two states, it is, that not obliging to such strict things, it leaves a greater facility for salvation, when there occur not other obstacles besides. As for the temporal advantages, I place them not here to be considered, because we look upon this state here only in reference to salvation. Moreover, the pleasures and contentments that are sound therein, are not comparable to the troubles and adversities with which it is replenished, according to that expression of St. Paul, who says, that afflictions are inevitable to married persons. I Cor. vii.

Fourthly, The dangers of this state are numerous, and they are by so much greater, as they are not discovered, nor often perceived by those who are envi-

roned with them.

The first springs from the excessive and unreasonable love that is frequently found between married persons, which is the cause of a vast number of fins they commit by a criminal compliance, making them fear more to displease their consort than offend God, and draw upon them his displeasure and indignation.

The second danger arises from a cause quite contrary to the former, which is an aversion they sometimes have for one another, proceeding from the contrariety of humours, jealousies, or other like causes. An aversion which draws after it a continual train of

fins, and an abyss of miseries.

The third danger comes from the irregular love they have for their children, which is also an inexhaustible source of sins to parents, when thro that foolish love they apply all their care for the temporal advantages of their children; as health, beauty, good behaviour, to promote them in the world, to heap up riches for them, which will only serve to destroy

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them.

them, to procure great employments for them, and in the mean time neglect their education, their correction, their amendment, their good life, and their eternal falvation.

The fourth danger is that of loving the world too much, and engaging themselves too deeply in the affection of the goods and pleasures of this life: an affe tion which makes them lose the taste and fense of real goods, which are those of grace and eternal falvation. This made St. Paul fay, that be who is married is perplexed with the affairs of the world, and his spirit is divided between God and the world. I Cor. vii. All these dangers are greater than can be exprest, and married persons have need of much grace to avoid them.

ARTICLE II.

The necessary dispositions for a married state.

W E may fay with truth, that the greatest part of the miseries which happen in a married life, springs from the bad dispositions of those who engage

in it, and particularly the following.

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The first is, the bad life of young people in their youth, and chiefly after they have finished their studies, until the time of their marriage: for if, as the wife man fays, God will give a happy marriage to those who have lived piously during their youth, it follows manifestly, that he frequently punisheth the fins of youth by an unfortunate marriage, as we daily fee.

The fecond fault is, the bad intention of those who enter into the state of marriage; who propose to themselves no other end in that state than pleasure, and the contents they expect to find therein, and which they conceive to be quite different from what in effect they are. up riches for them, which will only ferve

The third is, that which is committed in the choice of the person they have a mind to espouse: a choice which is ordinarily made without consulting God, without any knowledge of the disposition, manners, or humour of the person with whom they are to be engaged for their whole life, and without any other consideration than that of interest, or frequently by an indiscreet and ill-grounded love. This is the complaint of St. Jerome, who says, it often happens that there is no choice made in marriages, and that the saults of the women are not

known till after they are espoused.

The fourth cause springs from the bad disposition they bring to the facrament of matrimony, which they often receive in a wicked state; and from all the disorders that are committed in the celebration of the nuptials, as well by the married as by those who are invited: for how can God give his benediction to a marriage wherein the parties bring a heart full of lewd thoughts, and unchaste defires; where they make expences of clothes and feafts, which offend Christian modesty, and frequently exceed their state and ability, and where all things pass in a licentious freedom of faying and doing any thing? So that these nuptials are rather the triumph of impure love, and a feast of the devil, than a marriage of Christians, which ought to be confecrated to modesty, and sanctified by the presence of Fesus Christ.

These are the most ordinary causes of bad marriages, and of all the miseries and missortunes which arise from thence. From whence it follows, that the first means to succeed well in so great and important an enterprize, is carefully to avoid all these so dread-

ful causes.

To perform this with success, this is what you shall do. You must be convinced of three truths, which are certain and undoubted maxims in this matter.

The first is, that the greatest happ ness that can befall him who embraces a married ife, is to succeed well in the choice of the person he would espouse; as on the contrary, there is no greater missortune than to succeed ill in this occasion. The second is, that this good success can only come from God. And the third, that God doth not ordinarily shew this favour, but to those who have lived well, or have done penance, and have not fallen into the faults we

have pointed at.

These three truths are expressed by the Holy Ghost himself; he teaches the first, when he says by the mouth of the wife man, (Prov. xviii.) That he who bath found a good wife, bath found a great bleffing; for a good wife makes her busband happy; that it is a blessing which surpasses all blessings; that there is nothing which can be compared to a virtuous wife. And on the contrary he faith, that (Eccl. xxvi.) he who bath met with a wicked wife, is like him who bath taken up a scorpion in his band; and that the company of a lion or serpent is more supportable than that of a bad wife. The second truth is expressed by these excellent words, that a prudent and discreet wife is the gift of God, to which there is nothing comparable. And in the Proverbs, that parents may well give a house and riches to their children, but it appertains only to God to give a discreet wife. Prov. xix. The third truth is a consequence of the second; for if God gives this great bleffing, it follows also, that a man must merit it from him, as he himself hath declared by the same wife man, who fays, A man is bappy when he finds a good wife, and that it is the portion of those who fear God; and that God gives it to man in recompence of his good actions.

And the angel Raphael says to the father of young Sarah, that his daughter was referved for young Toby, because he feared God, and that the others had been

unworthy of ber by reason of their sins.

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The second thing you have to do when you are fully convinced of these truths, is to take care to avoid the sour faults we mentioned, which are the most ordinary causes of bad marriages, and by avoiding them to practise the contrary actions, which are

the necessary dispositions for marriage.

First then, Live well during your youth. Be chaste, and let not the love of pleasures take possession of your heart. Follow not the torrent of the bad example of those of your age, who seek nothing but pleasures. Be asraid, lest God punish you by the same way by which you shall have sinned, and that for the pleasures you shall have taken during your youth, which are soon past, he send you the anguish and trouble of unhappy marriage, which will continue

all your life.

Secondly, When you shall be at the time of thinking of marriage, be careful to look upon it with a chaste and pure eye, and have nothing but a holy intention, which feeks not pleafure and delight in fo pious a thing, but the virtuous end which a Christian ought to propose to himself. The angel Raphael hath declared it in a word to young Toby; You Shall marry in the fear of God, with an intention of baving children, and not thro' a love of pleasures; Tob. vi. Call to mind the terrible example of the feven hufbands of young Sarah, who were all stifled by the devil on the day of their nuptials, and learn from thence the cause which the same angel told to Toby; Give ear to me, says he to him, and I will tell you who those are, over whom the devil hath power: for those who enter into marriage, not having God with them, or thinking on him, and who only feek wanton pleasures, as beasts which have no reason, are they over whom the devil bath power. Ibid.

Imprint these words deeply in your mind, and know, that if the devil does not destroy those immediately who abused the sanctity of marriage, he wants not other means to exercise over them the power God hath given him, whereof he discovers but too many effects by all the miseries with which he insests the married state. They who would not fall into them, ought to avoid the cause, and have nothing but a chaste love in their heart, so that they may truly say to God those excellent words of young Toby, Lord, thou knowest that it is not the love of pleasures which make me take this wife, but the desire of a holy posterity, which may bless thy name for ever. Chap. viii.

Thirdly, When you shall have a good intention, employ the proper means to deliberate well on so important an affair. The first, and most necessary, is to consult God by prayer, since a good marriage is the gift of God, and one of his greatest favours for those who embrace that state, as we have shewn you. Moreover, there being nothing more difficult than to know well the disposition and humour of the person, the divine assistance is most particularly necessary, that you may not be deceived therein, and this assissance ought to be demanded; to prayer must be added all human and virtuous means to discover the disposition of the person, that you may not be rashly

engaged, and know before you love.

Fourthly, When you shall be at the point of accomplishing this great affair, remember to avoid the considerable faults which we have pointed at above, and are usually committed at the celebration of marriage. And first, because it is a sacrament, which ought to be received in the state of grace, you must dispose yourself for it by confession and communion. Tis true, 'tis ordinarily done, but it is also true, that it is frequently performed so badly, that there is no confession in one's whole life that is worse made; for it is often without preparation, and with a mind full of distractions, which thinks of nothing less than of God, and the affairs of salvation, but is intent upon the excess, vanity, and pomps of the world: not to speak

speak of those who confess in haste, without examen, without contrition, without having thought of the amendment of their life, which makes them commit one facrilege in confession, and another in receiving the facrament of matrimony. Not to speak also of those, who having confessed themselves well, relapse into fin before matrimony, by defire or immodest actions. There is no need to tell you these confessions may draw great misfortunes upon marriages: for befides, that it makes them lose all the graces which the facrament confers on married persons, to acquit themfelves of the obligations of their state, and that for want of these graces they fall into a vast number of fins, they draw upon them also the malediction of God, who fees himfelf offended by a facrilege at the time when they have most need of his grace. Avoid this fo important and dreadful a fault at that juncture. Content not yourself with bare confession. time to think feriously of your falvation, by retiring privately for some days, or for some hours in many days; and in that retirement pray to God, demand his grace, implore his mercy, examine well your conscience to confess all your sins, propose to yourself to live piously for the future, and to acquit yourself of all the obligations of your marriage; and to perform the better all these things, make choice of a discreet confessor, of whom you may receive all the advices neceffary for you. Read some books which may instruct you in the holiness of matrimony, and in its obligations. I advise you to read the history of Toby in the facred scripture, you will there find rules, and the model of a truly holy marriage, with the bleffings which crowned it.

In fine, in the celebration of the nuptials be mindful to avoid excess in clothes and feasts, and all expences tending to vanity; and instead of those expences, which are only done to please men, give some considerable alms to the poor, which will attract

the divine benediction, as it is said of Toby, That after the nuptial benediction they made the wedding feast,

but in the fight and fear of God. Chap. ix.

Be careful that all things be managed with virtue and modesty, so that God be no wise offended. When you invite your relations and friends, remember to invite Fesus Christ thither; that is, befeech him that he will be prefent by his grace, and give his bleffing to it, as he did to the wedding of Cana. Forget not also to invite thither his holy mother: it was she who had a care to supply what was wanting in those nuptials, and who befeeched her fon to have compassion on them, and by that prayer obtained that great miracle of the change of water into wine: The will perform the same in respect of you, if you pray to her as you ought. For, as St. Bernard fays (de Nupt.) if the hath had compation on the temporal necessities of those who had invited her, there is no doubt but fhe will be the same for your spiritual necessities: she will obtain by her intercession what is ordinarily wanting in nuptials; not a material wine, but the spiritual wine of the love of God, of a good intention, of a conjugal chastity, of a folid and persevering virtue, and all the necessary favours to acquit yourself of the obligation of your state.

ARTICLE III.

The conclusion of the foregoing chapter.

In fine, dear Theotime, when you shall be once engaged in a worldly life, and in the state of matrix mony, propose to yourself to live in such a manner, that your state be not a cause of your damnation, but a certain means of your salvation. It was on this consideration that you made choice of it, and God hath given it you only for this end. Labour therefore to sollow the intention of God, and to put in execution that

that which you yourself have undertaken. For this reason I have above pointed at the obligation of your state, and the dangers with which it abounds, that you may avoid these, and have a care to discharge

yourself of the other.

These obligations may be reduced to four things, which married people owe to God, their consort, their children, and themselves. They owe to God a holy life, well regulated in the path of his commandments; to their spouse, an inviolable sidelity; to their children, the care of educating them in the sear of God; and to themselves, the care of their salvation, by preferring it before all temporal blessings. Propose to yourself these sour obligations, as the indispensible rules which you ought always to have before your eyes, to acquit yourself faithfully of them.

As for the dangers, use all your endeavours absolutely to avoid them: we have above reduced them to four, which are the most ordinary sources of all, both temporal and spiritual miseries, which happen to

married persons.

You will prevent the first and third, by placing frequently before your eyes that expression of Jesus Christ, (Math. x.) He who loves his father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. If you love God as you ought, you will love him above all things, that is, more than any thing that is most dear to you in the world. He who loves him not in this manner, will never be worthy to possess him in his eternal happiness. The wife and children must be loved next to God, according to God, and for God.

The second danger which springs from the aversion, which sometimes arises between married persons, is a mischief which is easilier prevented than cured. To perform both the one and the other, there is no better means than frequently to represent unto yourself that excellent admonition St. Paul gives to men, (Epb. v.) To love their wives as Jesus Christ loved the

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church bis spouse, for whom he gave himself, that he might santify her. If you will consider well this example, you will find therein a perfect model of the true love married persons ought to hear to their wives, which ought to be a generous love, which raises them above their impersections, to support them with patience, and to cure them by the convenient means which prudence and charity shall suggest to them, if they have a real desire to save themselves with them.

And in fine, you shall avoid the fourth danger, which comes from the love of the world, by this great advice which the same apostle gives to married persons, (1 Cor. vii. 29.) which they ought always to revolve in their mind. This therefore I fay, brethren, the time is foort, it remains, that they also who have wives be as the they had not; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoice, as tho' they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as the they possessed not; and they that use the world, as the' they used it not; for the figure of this world passeth away. The meaning is, that this life being short, we must make use of these goods with much moderation, and as by the by, not fixing our affection upon them; and that the goods of this life having more of appearance than folidity, it is a great folly to love them to the prejudice of those of the other life, which are real goods; and for these imaginary and perishable riches, to put one's felf in danger of losing eternal blessings which shall never end, and by losing them, draw upon one's felf an eternity of mileries. The should I would

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Of a fingle life.

and so Gods according to God, and for God

I Speak not here of the fingle life of priests and religious, but of the state of continence, which perfons

fons of both sexes sometimes observe in the world; which may happen two ways, by necessity or by election. By necessity, when for some cause which depends not on us, as poverty, infirmity, or some other invincible impediment, a man cannot attain to a good marriage. By election, when by deliberate purpose one renounces the state of matrimony, to live in a perpetual continence.

They who chance to be obliged to continence by the former way, have need of much virtue, to fave themselves in a state wherein they remain against their

will.

the vexation their condition obliges them to. They ought to confider, that it is God who by his will hath placed them in that state; that he hath done it for good reasons, and chiefly for their salvation: from whence it follows, that he will not fail to bestow on them, all the graces necessary to observe continence, and live holily in their condition. Now after all, they have this advantage, which is found in none of the other states, to be fully assured that their vocation comes from God, and by consequence nothing will be wanting on his part, to effect their salvation in the state wherein God hath placed them.

2. Being convinced of these truths, they must perform a second thing, which is, as it is ordinarily said, make a virtue of necessity, by doing thro a voluntary acceptance of their state, what they would have done by choosing it freely, if they had had their wish; that is to say, they must embrace their condition as coming from the hand of God, and consecrate to him their chastity, as a present he requires of them, which may be as pleasing to him as if they had of-

fered it by their express and proper motion.

3. After they have thus voluntarily accepted the condition God hath placed them in, they must propose to live holily therein, and use the necessary means

for that end, which are the same we are about to give to them who make choice of it by their own proper will.

I come now to those who voluntarily prefer the state of continence before that of marriage, and I say they have need of many admonitions, which I beseech you, Theotime, to weigh well if you be of that number.

The first is, to examine well the motive which induces you to embrace this choice, and the life you would lead in that condition: for, if you only make choice of the state of continence to avoid the troubles and perplexity of marriage, and if you would live in that condition with all the liberty a man gives himfelf in marriage, to take therein all your pleasures, to converse with women, and be as fond of diversion and worldly company as if you were married, it is certain your choice is worth nothing; it is a fnare the devil lays for you, to make you fall into an infinite number of fins against chastity, from which it is impossible to preserve yourself amidst pleasures, and fo many dangers and occasions. Consequently I make no difficulty of afferting that you would do better to marry, and are obliged to it. If you will choose well the state of continence, and according to God, you must embrace it by a motive of piety, that is, to please God more in that state, and to effect your salvation better. This is the fole and only intention you ought to have in choosing so perfect a state as that, and they who have it not, have embraced it on an ill account, and with danger of making a wretched end. Whereof, Theotime, examine seriously that which you have, be careful of being deceiv'd in it; be folicitous to confer with fome wife and pious person about it.

Secondly, When you shall be assured of your intention, you must come to the means to acquit your-felf well of that state, whereof the first is to know perfectly the greatness of it, the advantages, and the

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As for the greatness, I shall not infift here to difcourse of what the fathers have said of the state of continence, because that would be endless; it suffices to fay, that this state surpasses much that of marriage; and altho' that be good and holy, as well by its inftitution, which comes from God, as for other reasons we have fpoken of above, the flate of continence is yet better, and much more holy.

It surpasses that of marriage, as a father of the church fays, As much as better things surpass less good; as things above, those which are below; as much as celestial surpass terrestrial, the more bappy and boly these which have less sanctity and holiness. S. Fulg. de Virg.

The advantages of this state are great; St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. hath comprised them in few words, when he faid, that they who were unmarried had their minds more free and disengaged from worldly affairs, have better means to think upon God, to please him, and to fanctify themselves both in body and mind.

The obligations of the same state are no less than its advantages. It obligeth to two great virtues, the practice of which are very difficult, chastity and humility. Chastity doth not only oblige to abstain from the pleasures which matrimony may render lawful, but also to preserve an absolute, entire, and perfect purity of mind and body, and to fly from whatfoever may in the least wound modesty in thought, word, or deed. And humility obliges them to preferve themselves carefully from falling into vanity, or having any good opinion or prefumption of themselves for the illustrious virtue of virginal chastity. These two virtues ought to be inseparable, and they have so great a connection one with another, that St. Fulgentius calls them by the fame name, faying, that humility is the virginity of the mind; and that it is so necessary for that of the body, that corporal chaftity is of no advantage without that of the mind; it being certain, that married persons shall be saved without observing but.

corporal virginity, and that virgins shall not without

the spiritual, which is humility that all many to show

From these two great obligations it is easy to judge of the dangers of that state; they are as great as these two virtues are difficult to practife, and to join together; and the enemy of our falvation employs all his endeavours against virgins, to make them lose both the one and the other. This is also the judgment of that great faint, who fays, that the devil affaults strongly these two virtues in virgins of both fexes, and when he cannot carry away the first by temptations, he endeavours to ravish the fecond by illusions. He also adds, that sometimes he attacks not fo strongly the chastity of the body, that he may more eafily prevail over that of the mind, which is more confiderable; that he lets himfelf be overcome in the temptations of the flesh, that by this victory he may instill pride into the mind of him who hath overcome; and that not being able to conquer virgins by bare-faced vice, which he inspires into them, he gains them by fins which he draws from their own virtue.

It is necessary however, Theotime, to admonish you, that these dangers ought not to prevent your embracing the state of continence, if you be inclined thereunto by a good motive, fuch as we have spoken of; for if it be true, that the trials of virginity are great, it is yet more true, that the grace of God is stronger to defend and preserve them; and that God by his goodness fails not to affist with his powerful favours, those who embrace so difficult a state, to ferve him more perfectly, and who feek all the neceffary means to discharge themselves well, whereof the first is that which we have spoken of, that is, to know well the greatness, the obligations, and the dangers of that ftate. do less your salt whoo entro salt of

The other means which he must practise, are prayer, and meditation upon holy things, industry, 100 Back

and all those others we have shewn above in Part III. Chap. VIII. to preserve chastity; and also those we have given to preserve humility, in Part IV. Chap. XXII.

CHAP. XIV.

Most important advice for young persons, who begin to enter into the world.

THE facred scripture in the second book of Maccabes, Chap. admonitions ii. recounts, that after the taking of the city of Jerusalem by Nabuchado-

nosor, when the Jews were upon the point of being sent to Babylon, the prophet Jeremy took care to surnish them with a great number of good admonitions against the occasions they should be exposed unto, of departing from God, and being utterly lost in that Pagan country. He gave them the law, that is, the scripture, that they might not forget the commandments of God, nor fall into error, seeing the idols of gold and silver, with all their ornaments. And in telling them many such like things, he exhorted them that they should never let the law of God be removed from their hearts.

What that holy prophet did on that occasion concerning the Jews, I ought to perform here in respect of you, dear Theotime, and with as much necessity. Having conducted you even to the end of youth, which ordinarily is spent in studies, or other employments convenient for that age; and considering you as about to enter into some state of life, I am obliged to admonish you of many things at that entrance, and to arm you with good advice against the dangers you will find in the world, where you will meet with no less hazards than the Jews did in the captivity of Babylon: it is a place where you will have many occa-

fions of forgetting God, and of ruining yourself. For this reason I exhort you with the prophet to have a care of yourself, that the law of God may never be taken out of your heart. For this end I have prepared for you the following advices, which I beseech you to read with much attention, as most important for your salvation.

ADVICE Í.

That the time of issuing out of youth, and entering into the world, is the most dangerous of all the life, and many are shipwreckt therein.

THIS is the first admonition I give you, and which I wish may be deeply engraven in the minds of all young people, to make them dread so slippery a step, and so dangerous a change for their

age, where many run unhappily into ruin.

It is there the devil waits for them, and where he hopes his attempts will not be vain and unsuccessful : he finds them all the possible advantages to withdraw them from virtue, if before they have been bred up therein, or engage them more deeply in vice; the liberty they begin to enjoy, the idleness into which they eafily fall at that time, the greater occasions they have of committing ill, the easier means they have to give themselves to merriment and pleasures, the new companies which they frequent, where they foon learn the spirit of the world, vanity, pride, love of pleafures, the maxims of the world, the imitation of the wicked, and the entire corruption of manners; the fentiments of virtue which they had learnt in their youth, are eafily diffipated; those feem now fit only for children, they think they must have a more refin'd and elevated spirit, they contemn what they esteem'd before; the most pious resolutions appear to them the effects of fimplicity; and from thence fprings the ruin of virtue, and the entire corruption of their manners, which follows that of the mind.

This truth is very manifest, experience makes it daily appear, to the great regret of those whom the

falvation of youth moves never fo little.

St. Augustin had made trial of this to his forrow, as he himself deplores it in his confessions, where he says, that domestick affairs having made him leave off his studies at the age of sixteen, and return to his sather's house, vices and wanton pleasures began, as he himself says, to grow above his head, as briars in a neglected ground, and to be multiplied so much more as there was no discreet hand to weed them out. Lib. 2. Conf. c. 3.

And I would to God he had not had so many companions in his misfortune; but the multitude of them are innumerable, particularly amongst young people, who have any advantage above others in

their condition or fortune.

There are few found to imitate the holy man Toby, whom all young persons ought to take for their example and model in that time; concerning whom the scripture observes so expressly, and on purpose, That in his youth he acted nothing childish; and that all his fellow-citizens going to adore the idols, he withdrew himself from their company, and went alone to Jerusalem to adore the true God, not permitting himself to be corrupted by the example of others. Tob. i. O whatan excellent pattern is this for young people, who enter into the world, and which they ought frequently to place before their eyes, as being proposed by the Holy Ghost for that intent.

Altho' there are few who imitate this example, yet there are some; God hath always his servants, he reserves some for himself, who bend not their knees before Baal, who permit not themselves to be corrupted by the contagion of the world. To the end, Theotime, you may be of that number, do I

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give you this fo necessary, and little known admonition, and continue the following advices.

and modern and ADVICE II.

That the chief care of young men, who enter the world, ought to be the preservation of the sentiments and practices of piety, which they have observed in their youth.

THE reason of this advice is, because the first source of the disorder of young persons in that time, springs from the change of the sentiments they have concerning piety, as we have said, and abandoning the practices they observed before, as daily prayer, reading pious books, frequenting the sacraments, conversation with virtuous persons, and chiefly conference with a discreet confessor. Wherefore I tell you, Theotime, that the prime care you ought to have at that time, is to preserve the sentiments of virtue which you have received, and the practice of those you have been instructed in.

As for the fentiments, know that virtue is always one and the fame, and in whatfoever age or occasion you be in, you are still obliged to confecrate yourself

to God, to obey and ferve him faithfully.

As for the practices, remember, that if you be obliged to virtue, you are also obliged in like manner to all the necessary means to acquire and preserve it; such are the practices we have spoken of above. Wherefore I advise you, as a thing most important for your salvation, not to desist from them; if you leave them off, you ruin yourself in vice. Be diligent in praying, in reading good books, in frequenting the sacraments, in conversing with virtuous perfons, and chiefly in discovering your conscience to a discreet ghostly father, whether to him who directed you before, if you can have him, for that is always best

best, or to another. It is in this that all young people are defective at that time. From the time they begin to know themselves, they will not discover themselves to any person; they fly from those who may keep them in the right path, or set them right when they are gone astray, which is the cause why they remove so far from them, and often never, or too late, return to them.

Act not in this manner, Theotime; call to mind that St. Augustin attributes to this cause the disorder he fell into at the end of his studies, because he had no one to take care to root out the vices which then grew in his soul. Forget not also what the scripture recounts of king Joas, that he was virtuous as long as he was instructed by the high priest Joiada, 4 Kings ii. he had no sooner lost the conduct of that holy man, but he became wicked, and was unhappily ruined.

ADVICE III.

That young men must fly wicked company, and particularly that of young vicious persons of their profession.

THE first snare the devil sets at See Part III. that time for the salvation of Chap. IX. young people, is wicked company:

we have spoken above how hurtful it is, principally at that time, where it is dangerous beyond imagination. The world abounding with it, it is very difficult to escape being entangled. Besides, they have not as yet sufficient judgment to discern, nor sufficient conduct to avoid, nor force of mind to resist it. The wicked besiege them continually, to draw them to their disorders, as it is said in the *Proverbs*, Chap. i. They tell them, they must do as others do; complaisance moves them, and shame hinders them from contradicting: thus they find themselves overcome Bb 2

and perverted in a small time. O God, Theotime, who will deliver you from this fo great and fo present

a danger!

Dread this precipice, if you defire your falvation; you can never fufficiently apprehend the danger. Befeech God daily that he would deliver you; stand upon your guard to avoid them, or retire from them

when you meet with fuch.

Among wicked company have a care chiefly of those of your own profession; you will meet with them more frequently, you will have more trouble to refift them; we eafilier permit ourselves to be won by those that are like us. King Joas, who had lived fo holily during his youth, under the conduct of the high priest Joiada, was perverted by his courtiers, so as by their solicitation to fall into idolatry. Stand upon your guard, I fay, that at least you may not be corrupted by them, altho' you cannot absolutely avoid the meeting with fuch company: for this reafon fly their conversation as much as you can; when you cannot avoid them, flay not long with them, find some means to break off fairly from them. O Theotime, how happy would you be, if after this fo dangerous a time of youth, you might truly fay as king David, The snares of sinners have environed me, thou hast preserved me, O God, from the assembly of the wicked, and from the multitude of those who work iniquity.

ADVICE IV.

That they must apply themselves quickly to some business, which may employ their time, and make them avoid idleness, which is then most dangerous, and more than at any other time.

Dleness is the greatest cause of the dissoluteness of young men when they have finished their studies. It is the mother of vice, and very hard to be avoided at that time. Nature of herself is inclined to it, and most

most of all in youth, after labour, and a labour perform'd with fome restraint, such as that of study, or other employments of young men. For this reason, when they begin to enjoy liberty, and to be masters of themselves, they abandon themselves to idleness with fo much less difficulty, as they have a long time fighed after it, and know not the necessity of being employed at that time, nor the great damages idleness will bring to them. In this flothfulness vice and ill habits grow up in a short time, as it happened to St. Augustin. They think of nothing but play and pastimes, following all their pleasures, seeking com-

pany, and all occasions of ruining themselves.

To avoid this disorder, Theotime, I advise you to have a great care to fly at that time this pernicious idleness. Apply yourself betimes to a regular employment, and chiefly to that which is necessary for you, to make you expert in the profession you embrace; you are obliged to it in conscience and in the fight of God. Add thereto the studies proper to improve your mind, as that of history, as well facred as profane, chronology, geography, languages, good authors, and other like studies, which are commendable, profitable, and pleasing. If you will take pains, you will find means enough to employ your time well; and besides the profit of your labour, you will find therein the most perfect pleasures and fatisfaction of mind, to which all the diversions in the world are not comparable. Read Part III. Chap. VII.

ADVICE V.

That young people ought to have a care of avoiding three ordinary causes of their ruin at that time, Play, Wine, and Impurity.

HESE are the three great rocks on which at this time young people split, and to which idleness and company bring them, and cause their ship-B b 2 wreck. wreck. Some are lost by the irregular love of gaming, which occasions an excessive loss of time, the ruin of their fortune, vexation and despair, and casts them frequently into extremities. Others by the excess of wine and good cheer, which they seek then as their chiefest happiness, and which besides the ruin of their healths and fortunes, is frequently the cause of sad mischiefs. Others, and the greatest part, by the detestable sin of impurity, which so universally possesses young people, and principally at that time; and many by all these together.

I befeech you, dear Theotime, in the name of God, to observe attentively these three precipices you are to avoid at that time. See what we have said above of each of these in Part III. Chap. VIII. and in Part IV. Chap. XX. Use all possible endeavours to sly them, and be consident, that upon this slight depends all

your good and eternal falvation.

ADVICE VI.

That they must avoid at that time irresolution concerning the state they ought to choose, and after the choice, not change easily, nor without great reason.

THIS is also an advice of much importance for young persons, when they are at the time of choosing a condition of life, not to be too long unresolved. The reason is, that this irresolution hinders them from applying themselves to any settled employment; it makes them lose much time, which might be usefully employed; it exposes them to many temptations, oftentimes to sadness and discontent; and when it continues long, it renders them unfit for any thing that is good all the rest of their life, as we daily see.

He must then resolve in good time on the state he will embrace, observing nevertheless in this resolution

the conditions we have spoken of above.

But

But after the resolution seriously taken, he ought to avoid inconstancy and change, which is yet a greater mischief than the first irresolution.

The evils which this inconstancy causes in a young man, cannot be sufficiently express'd: the devil makes use of it to cast him into melancholy, vexation, and disquiet; from thence into a long idleness, to make him lose unprofitably the best part of his life, and hinder him from making himself capable of any good employment. He there takes occasion of moving him to impatience, to a distaste of virtue, to a looseness in the exercise of piety, and of casting him into great temptations, and often deeply into vice.

This made the wife man fay, that he who changes his resolution, is like a bird which leaves his nest; Prov. vii. For as that bird finds neither repose nor security, flying up and down without meeting with any restingplace, exposing her life to many dangers, so an unconstant man finds no quiet, but exposes his soul to

many hazards.

Avoid then, Theotime, this inconstancy of resolution; and if you be disturb'd with it, be assured that you are exposed to a very dangerous evil, and a great temptation. This mischief is frequently the punishment of the sins of youth; wherefore humble yourself before God, and beg of him that he would deliver you from it by his grace, and bestow on you a constancy of mind to continue in his will, and faithfully perform it.

Make a firm resolution in the manner we have said, maturely, and with advised counsel; and when that is done, befure not to change on any account. But if there occurs some solid reason for changing your resolution, trust not to your own judgment, but to that of discreet persons; and in waiting their advice, remain still in your former resolution, and continue the exercises you performed to prepare yourself for

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it, until by discreet counsel you find an absolute reafon to change.

ADVICE VII.

That young men ought to foresee the dangers and obligations of their profession, and sirmly purpose to avoid those dangers, and acquit themselves of their obligations, and live in their profession like virtuous men, and according to God.

I Have spoken above of the dangers and obligations of divers states, that I might give you this precaution, and make you take this resolution.

Now I speak not of a slight foreseeing, nor of a short resolution, but of a serious and well meditated foresight, and of a long and often repeated resolution.

But to render it efficacious, I desire two things. The first is, to beseech God frequently that he would assist you with his holy grace, to avoid the dangers you meet with in the world, and discharge yourself of the duty of a true Christian in your profession, and also of the particular obligations it lays on you. The second is, to set apart one day every month to read and consider what we have said of the dangers and obligations of the state you have chosen, in order to restlect seriously, and renew your resolution of avoiding the dangers of your profession, and complying with its obligations.

ADVICE VIII.

That they must accustom themselves betimes not to be ashamed of virtue, nor of following its distates.

WHEN you shall be armed and fortified against all the former obstacles, there will remain yet one for you to encounter with, which is that wretched thame

not distruct to prepare vourtely to

shame one frequently has for virtue. The world is so corrupted, that virtue is become the object of shame and confusion, particularly amongst young persons. For this reason I advertise you to accustom yourself betimes to surmount that foolish shame, one of the greatest obstacles to salvation. It is most criminal in the sight of God, to blush at his service; and he will not acknowledge those for his servants, who have blushed to perform his commandments.

You must resist this shame, Theotime, with all your power, there is only a little trouble in the beginning; you must declare yourself early, praising good, and blaming evil, and perform freely the actions of a virtuous man, equally avoiding two extremes: the one is, doing it to please men; the other, neglecting it for fear of them. We must perform good actions, without concerning ourselves with what the world may say or think of it, but only regarding God and the duty of a Christian. See what we have said of this subject in Part III. Chap. V.

ADVICE IX.

That they must have a care to embrace a solid and real virtue, and not an apparent and deceitful piety.

THIS also, Theotime, is an eminent danger which you will find in the world, wherein being refolved to live virtuously, you may be deceived in the choice of piety, leaving solid and real virtue, to embrace a false and imaginary devotion, which oftentimes is more dangerous than bare-faced vice, yet nevertheless very common amongst men of all states, even amongst ecclesiasticks and regu-

lars. Now there are many forts of Four forts of this false piety, amongst which these false piety. four are the most ordinary.

The

themselves only to the exterior shew of piety, performing carefully certain outward actions of devotion, as some usual course of prayer, certain abstinences and sasts not commanded, or other exterior mortification, some practices of confraternities, and other like devotions, and in the mean time neglect interior and solid virtue, that is, the slight of sin, the correction of their vices, mortification of their passions, continuing always in the same vices, proud, cholerick, not being able to suffer any thing, revengeful, extraordinarily addicted to earthly goods, to the pleasures of this life, to excess, to vanity, and often to unchaste delights, and to many other vices.

Second. themselves to the works of counsel, and leave those of command and obligation. Such is the piety of the master of a family, who applies himself to frequent the sacraments, to be diligent at church, to visit hospitals, and in the mean time neglects the care he ought to have of his family, to instruct his children, to withdraw them from vice when they are engaged therein, to be solicitous for the salvation of his domesticks, to watch over their actions, to correct the disorders of his house, to pay his debts, to restore ill-gotten goods.

The third is of those, who among the things commanded observe some and leave others, practise those which they find easiest, or conformable to their inclination, and omit those which seem to them more difficult.

and omit those which seem to them more difficult. For example, there are those who would do no wrong to their neighbour in his goods, and yet make no scruple of taking away their honour by detraction. Others have an aversion for drunkenness, but not for impurity. Others hate lewd actions, but not unchaste desires and discourses. Others love to affift their neighbour, but never will be brought to pardon

an offence. Now all these pieties are false, because he who is defective in one fole commandment hath no charity.

The fourth is of those who observe

the things of obligation which are common to all Christians, and perform not those which belong to the particular duty of their state. Thus for a fuperior, a pastor, a magistrate, to live like an honest man, and in the mean time to neglect the care of his charge, and the particular obligations of his calling, is not a true, but false virtue. The virtues of a private man are different from those of a publick person, and in each condition there are particular obligations, wherein one cannot fail without being wanting to virtue, and entirely destroying it.

I should be too long, if I should treat of all forts of false piety; that you may comprehend them briefly, Theotime, I shall advise you not to embrace a proud and arrogant virtue, which despises others, which can fuffer nothing, which takes notice of the faults of

others, but acknowledges not its own.

Nor a fullen and melancholy virtue, which makes itself troublesome and difficult to all, severe to others, eafy to itself; ready to blame, but never to excuse,

even when there is great reason.

Nor a fingular virtue, which fequesters itself from the ways of others, to follow extraordinary practices, new devotions, affected fingularities, which are often

the effects of a fecret and great prefumption.

Nor a mean, filly, and childish virtue, which trembles where it ought not to fear, flands in dread where it ought not to doubt, which makes a scruple of things which are not fins, and no difficulty of thefe which are.

Nor on the contrary, a rash, and too bold a virtue, which under pretext of not committing great crimes, gives itself liberty for all other fins, which is a great error, because he who contemns little faults,

shall fall into great ones.

For an imprudent and indifcreet virtue, which takes no care of many faults which offend their neighbour, and which destroys more by its ill conduct, than it edifies by the good it does.

Nor a human and politick virtue, which acts good for worldly confiderations, to please some one, to be esteemed, to obtain some design; briefly, which re-

gards itself in all things it performs.

Nor an interested virtue, which addicts itself to good, by reason of the benefit it receives from it, and

its temporal advancement.

Nor a remifs virtue, or of short continuance, which is dejected by the least obstacle, which defists from doing well, and returns back because of the difficulties it encounters therein.

Be cautious to avoid all these sorts of virtues, Theotime, or rather all the faults which destroy true virtue; labour to shun them, and acquire the contrary qualities. Let your virtue be humble in itself, sweet and charitable towards others, not singular; which loves the order of the church, and conduct of its pastors; rational, that is, neither too searful nor too bold; discreet in its actions, disinterested in its pretensions, which seeks only to please God, and to perform good actions only for his sake; generous in the midst of obstacles, and persevering when surrounded with difficulties.

ADVICE X.

That young persons ought to fix themselves more and more in solid sentiments of faith and religion.

THIS is also a very necessary admonition, because faith is the solid ground-work of piety, and without her there is no salvation. Heb. xii. Now

you will find in the world many machines level'd against this fundamental rock, from which you must guard yourself; and for this end it is good you should be advertised of them. These are impiety, herefy, and licentiousness. Impiety of the wicked, herefy of reformers in matters of religion, and the licentiousness of some wicked Catholicks.

Impiety is a monster which attacks God himself, which lifts up its head against heaven (fob xv.) and its hand against the omnipotent, and which revolts against its creator, to serve unworthily the creature, endeavouring to deface in its heart the most holy and inviolable sentiments which faith, reason, and nature herself had imprinted there, to abandon itself to its passions with more liberty, and less remorse of conscience.

Herefy, to follow its own proper judgment in matters of faith, shakes off the yoke of the Catholick church, which is the pillar and rock of truth, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. Matth. xvi. according to the promise of the Son of God, who commands us to hearken to her, except we will be accounted heathens; (Chap. xviii.) so that he who doth not acknowledge this holy mother, shall not have God for his father, as St. Cyprian and St. Augustin, and others speak.

The licentiousness of wicked Catholicks, making them seek means to cherish and flatter themselves in their vices, emboldens them to take the liberty to examine divine truths, and judge of them by human reasoning; thence to fall into doubt, and from doubt into impious opinions, secret and hidden errors, which

lead them to perdition.

These are the three monsters, Theotime, whose encounter in the world you ought to stand in dread of: sly them, and have a horror and abomination for them, as the offspring of hell, and the plague of human kind: avoid all those in whom you shall find them.

them. There will be men, says the great apostle, lovers of themselves, covetous, proud, blasphemers, wicked, who love pleasures more than God; avoid them. 2 Tim. iii.

Account it for an infallible maxim, that there is nothing more certain and immovable than the Chriftian catholick faith. This faith so sublime in her mysteries, so pure and holy in her maxims, supported by so great authorities, foretold by the prophets, confirmed by so many miracles, cemented by the blood of martyrs, defended by so many learned and faintly persons, embraced by such a multitude of people, continued during so many ages, which hath never been shaken, either by the persecution of Pagans, or by the false doctrine of hereticks, or by the wicked lives of Catholicks.

After all these things (says St. Austin, l. de util. cred.) Shall we doubt to enclose ourselves in the bosom of this boly church, which according to the confession of the whole world, since the apostles to this present time, by a perpetual succession of bishops and pastors, hath always stood on foot, in the midst of a vast number of hereticks, who have in vain assaulted her, and who have always been condemned, either by the judgment of the people themselves, or by the authority of councils, or by the force of miracles? Not to acknowledge the primacy of this church, is an effect of the highest impiety, or of an unbridled arrogance.

Meditate well on these considerations, which are powerful enough to subdue the most rebellious spirits. Give thanks to God, that he hath placed you in the bosom of this holy church, continue firm and constant therein, adhere always to the pious doctrine of this infallible guide, be subject to her pastors, and to her visible head the supreme bishop. This is the body of the tree, from which we must never separate to stick to the boughs. But to preserve your faith, remember to lead a good life; because the corrup-

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tion of faith is an effect of fin. I recommend unto you chiefly (fays St. Paul to Timothy) that you fight stoutly, preserving faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, have made shipwreck of their faith. I Tim.ii.

ADVICE XI.

That they must be strongly settled in the Christian maxims, opposite to those of the world.

T is not fufficient to be established in the solid sentiments of faith, you must also be settled in the maxims of morals, and of a Christian life. The greatest danger you will find in the world, is that of corrupting your mind by its false maxims, quite contrary to those of falvation, by which the judgment being corrupted, it is impossible that the life and actions should not be absolutely deprav'd. You will see in Babylon (said the prophet Jeremy, writing to the Fews in captivity, Bar. 6.) the idols of gold and filver, which are carried upon their backs, to cause a terror and respect in men; have a care you adore them not with others. When therefore you shall see the world, which adores them in great troops from all parts, say in your heart, O Lord, thou alone art he who ought to be adored. I fay the fame unto you, Theotime, you will fee men in the world adoring idols, that is, pleafures, vanities, riches, the flesh, and their passions; you will there see vice honoured, virtue contemned; you will there hear maxims fuitable to the corruption which the devil hath introduced. Be careful that you permit not yourself to be depraved by the example of the multitude. For this effect place frequently before your eyes the true maxims of Christianity, those eternal truths which the world will not know, and which will never alter or change. Imprint them deeply in your mind, to have recourse to them there. against the example and false maxims of the world; that that may serve you as certain rules for the conduct of your life: I shall give you here the most important, which I beseech you to read often.

CHAP. XV.

Christian maxims.

MAXIM I.

That we are not created for this present life, but for beaven.

THIS is the fundamental truth of Christianity: that there is a God, and that he hath prepared an eternal reward for them who serve him; that this life is but a passage and way by which we must walk towards life everlasting. We have not here a permanent city, says the apostle, but seek for one hereaster. Heb. xi.

MAXIM II.

That the most important affair which we have in this life, is our salvation.

THERE is one thing necessary, saith truth itself, Luke x. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matth. xvi.

MAXIM III.

That salvation is not obtained without pain and labour.

THIS is what men cannot be convinced of, and yet it is most certain. The Son of God cries out aloud to all Christians, The kingdom of God suffers violence.

violence. If any one will follow me, he must renounce himself, and carry his cross. Matth. xvi. The gate is narrow, and the way strait which leads to salvation, and there are few who find it. Chap. vii. Observe these words. In another place he says, Strive to enter by the narrow gate; many, I tell you, will seek to enter therein, but cannot. Luke xiii.

MAXIM IV.

That our chiefest care in this life must be to please God, and live in his grace.

vereign good, is the fole and real happiness of man in this life: a happiness, without which the greatest blessings are extreme miseries, and which the great apostle wishes particularly to his dear disciples, and to all Christians. I cease not, says he, to pray for you, and to beseech God that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and understanding, and that you may walk worthily, pleasing God in all things, fructifying in all sorts of good works, encreasing in the knowledge of God. Col. ii. Were Christians convinced of this truth, they would fly sin like death itself, and seek all means of pleasing God, and living in his holy grace.

MAXIM V.

That we cannot be in the grace of God without having a constant resolution never to offend him grievously on any account whatsoever.

In this resolution consists the practice of the great commandment of loving God above all things, without which it is impossible to please him, and be in his grace; for he who loves him not, remains in death.

The Instruction of Youth

386 death. Now we cannot love God without this resolution of never offending him. If any one loves me, fays the Son of God, he keeps my commandments. He who loves me not, observes not my words. John xiv.

MAXIM VI.

That sin is the greatest evil which can befall a man.

CIN offers an infinite injury to God, which all men and angels cannot possibly repair: it deprives man of the grace of God, and makes him incur his hatred and indignation: it causes him to lose heaven for ever, and puts him in the state of eternal damnation: it renders him unworthy of all the graces neceffary to raife him from that deplorable condition, wherein God may justly leave him as he does many. O God, is there any mischief in the world to be compared to this? Is it possible men should think so little of it, and not dread so horrible an evil? And you, Theotime, do you confider well of it? Do you fly from it in your actions?

MAXIM VII.

That the worst of all misfortunes is to die in mortal fin.

T is the misery of miseries, because it is the beginning of eternal misery, the loss of all happiness, the fource of all evils, and that without remedy, without recovery, and without any hope; in a word, it is eternal damnation. To comprehend this misfortune, confider if you can what it is to lofe God, and that for ever; to be banished from heaven, and that for ever; to be condemned to the flames of hell, with the devils, and that for ever, without end, without cessation, without comfort, without hope: always in rage, always in despair, for being fallen into this dreaddeath.

dreadful calamity, having been able to avoid it, having despised God's grace, having lost such means of falvation. O Theotime, is it possible to think on this misfortune, and not stand in dread of it?

MAXIM VIII.

That this misfortune happens to many, and to those who think the least of it.

T happens to all those who have not time to do penance before their death, or having time, were not penitent at all, or as they ought, dying without the dispositions necessary for salvation. For this reafon the Son of God hath fo often advertised us to watch, to be upon our guard; we know not when the time will come; we know neither the day nor the bour; to be always prepared, because he will come at the hour we think not on; what I say to you, I say to all, watch.

MAXIM IX.

That we must think frequently on death, judgment, and

THIS is the chief means to avoid that fo common a misfortune. He who shall reflect well on the judgment of God, will be afraid to fall into fin, or to continue in it never so little. This is the great advice of the wife man, which all men ought to have continually in their memory, In all your actions remember your last things, and you shall never sin. Eccl. vii. This young persons seldom consider. Think well on it, Theotime, that by reflecting on God's judgments you may avoid offending him.

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dreadful calamity XavM i X A Mo avoid it. have

That we must serve God for himself, and thro' love.

LTHO' the confiderations of death, judgment, and eternity, be effectual and necessary to move us to virtue, nevertheless we must not Read Part IV. Stop there; it appertains only to ser-Chap. II. and vile fouls to be guided by fear alone, III. and the generous fouls serve God for love, instruction con- and because he deserves to be belov'd, cerning com- honour'd, and ferv'd. Fear is good, munion, Part but it must not be alone, love must II. Chap. III. perfect what fear hath begun. Art. IV. Theotime, how is it possible for a soul to serve a God so amiable in himself, and from whom she hath received all she possesses and expects, all she hopes for, otherwise than from a motive of love?

MAXIM XI.

That we must have a rule for our actions, and that this rule ought to be the law of God, the example and doctrine of Jesus Christ, and not the world, nor the example of others, nor custom.

It is a common maxim among men, to do as others do; and to bring for a reason of their actions, that the world does so; that it is the custom; that such and such act so. This is a wicked, false, and pernicious maxim. Men are not our rule, but God. The World is all full of error: men, whatsoever they be, are subject to failings. God is truth himself, he hath given us his law to conduct us, he hath commanded us to hearken to him: Hear you bim, (Matt. xvi.) that is the rule we ought to follow. Let not those (says S. Jerom Ep ad Celant.)

Celant.) who make profession to be the disciples of truth, follow the erring multitude: It is most safe to follow him who saith, he is the way, the truth, and the life; Mat. xviii. Never govern yourself by the world, by custom, or by example of others: and in all your actions look not upon the practice nor judgment of men, but upon the law of God, and the doctrine of fesus Christ and his church, which he hath commanded us to hear and follow, and act nothing but what shall be conformable to that infallible rule.

MAXIM XII.

That the world is deceived in all its judgments and maxims.

IT is easy to manifest this maxim by induction. The world places its sovereign happiness in riches, it defires them with earnestness, and seeks after them before all things. And the truth is, that riches make not a man happy, they are frequently great impediments to salvation; for real riches consist in the possession of God, Ps. cxlii.

The world makes account, that there is no contentment but that which is found in the satisfaction of the senses, and in the pleasures of this life. And the truth is, that there is no solid pleasure but in virtue.

The world places honour in many things which are not honourable, as in esteem, reputation, dignities, places of honour, respect of men. And the truth is, that real honour consists in virtue, and is inseparable from it.

The world places courage and generofity in taking revenge, and in not pardoning injuries. And the truth is, courage confifts in pardoning, or else the fon of God had no courage, when he pray'd on the cross for his perfecutors, and was deceived when he commanded us to love our enemies. Either the son of

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judgment of

And the truth

God (fays St. Bernard Serm. 3. de Nativ.) is deceived, or else the world errs. But the Son of God is truth itself, which cannot be deceived: The world then is mistaken and errs in all its maxims: it is not the world therefore we are to follow, but Jesus Christ.

MAXIM XIII. fon slool anorths

That to be united only to God, we must contemn earthly things. nothing but what us to hear and

VES, Theotime, for all that is in the world is vanity; there is nothing folid but God, and in God. Vanity of vanities, fays the wife man, and all things are vanity; Eccl. i. All that is here is nothing, all passes like a shadow and smoak. For this reason the divine apostle said, be contemned all things, and esteemed them as dung, that he might purchase Jesus Christ; Phil. iii. And the well beloved disciple cries to all the faithful, Love not the world nor the things that are in the world; if any one loves the world, he loves not God, because all that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life. The world passes, and its concupifcence; I Joh. ii. Make choice (adds S. Augustin) either to set your affection on temporal things, and pass with time; or to love everlasting things, and live eternally with God; Tr. 2. in 1 S. Joan.

are not honourable as in edeam routation, dignities,

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THIS, dear Theotime, is the last advice I have to give to compleat your instruction, it is the greatest and most necessary of all. It is to no purpose to have entered the path of virtue, nor to have made some progress therein, except we persevere to the end: It is perseverance which crowns a good life, and deferves

deserves the recompence; that finishes the great work of salvation, and introduces us into eternal happiness.

It is a great happiness to have been faithful to the divine grace in youth, and also to have preserved virtue at our entering into a state of life; but it is a horrible misfortune, when forgetting the great obligations we have to serve God, and abusing the favours we have received by his mercy, we unhappily abandon it to follow fin. O Theotime, comprehend well this mifery. Wo be to them, fays the wife man, who have lost perfeverance, and have departed from the way of virtue, to wander in the bigh road of vice! What will they do when God shall examine their life? Eccl. ii. Yes, Theotime, what will they answer at that dreadful day of the divine judgment, when God shall make them see the greatness and multitude of his favours, and shall reproach their wicked ingratitude, their infidelity, their inconstancy in his service, the blindness with which they abandon'd him, who is the fountain of all bleffings, and the fole author of falvation? Had it not been better for them (fays the apostle St. Peter) that they had never known the path of virtue, than after baving known it, to retreat, and turn their backs to the boly law which had been given them? 2 Pet. ii.

There is no question but a good beginning in youth is highly necessary for a happy end, there is no doubt but it avails much; but it is not always pursued, and that it happens too often to men as to trees, which bear fair blossoms in the spring, and no fruit in autumn. The sacred scripture furnishes us with many examples of those who have finished their life in virtue, having embraced it in their youth; but it also produces some who have not persever'd, to teach men the great care they ought to have to continue constant in the way of justice.

We have a convincing proof of this truth in the example I have often cited, of king Jeas, who hav-

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ing lived in virtue from his tender youth till the age of forty years and more, fell most deplorably into vice

and idolatry.

But that of Solomon is dreadful in this matter. That prince had been favoured in his youth with extraordinary bleffings. He had been bred up in virtue by the incredible care of his parents, as he himfelf testifies. He was in his youth the most pure, most holy, and the most accomplished of any that ever lived. God had done him the honour to speak to him personally, and gave him permission to demand of him whatsoever he pleased. In this liberty of wishing granted him, he was so wise and virtuous, that he demanded neither riches, nor pleasures, nor glory, nor any of the things which young people are accustomed so greedily to seek after, but only virtue and wisdom.

This choice was so pleasing to God, that he granted him wisdom, by which he surpassed all men that ever had been, or should be after him. With this great wildom he spends the better part of his life in eminent virtue, acceptable to God, honoured, and almost adored by men, who came from all parts of the world to hear his wisdom; governing his people with an admirable conduct, instructing them in the fervice of God by his wife discourses, and by the facred books he had composed, full of divine wisdom, dictated by the Holy Ghost himself. Eccl. i. 2. Now after all this, O Theotime (who could believe it, if the scripture had not faid it?) after all these favours, and all these wonders, this incomparable man fell so misfortunately, that he cast himself into a dreadful precipice. This great light was ecclipfed, this fo admirable wisdom permitted itself to be surprized, and this great wit, who had been the wifest of mortals, letting his heart be conquered by the love of women, loft in a short time all his wisdom, and became infatuated even to fuch a degree, as to commit idolatry with

with his idolatrous women, and to adore as many idols as he had women of different religions. 3 Kings XI.

O human misery, how great art thou! O weakness and inconstancy of man! Who is there that ought not to tremble after this terrible example? If the highest virtues fall so miserably, what ought not common and mean virtues to fear? Woe, and woe again to those who have lost perseverance, and who have departed from the path of virtue, to go aftray in the great road of vice!

O my dear Theotime, let us learn by this example. to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; Phil. ii. not to trust to our own past merits, but to be always upon our guard. He who thinks he stands, let bim have a care of falling. I Cor. x. He did not fay, he who shall have begun, but he who shall have persevered until the end, shall be saved. Matth. xxiv.

To avoid this misfortune, fee here the means you

must practise.

1. Be faithful to the divine grace; for as the holy council of Trent fays admirably, Except we be wanting to the grace of God, be will perfect in us the happiness be bath begun, working in us the will and accom-

plishment. Seff. 6. c. 13.

2. Live always in humility, in fear, in a distrust of yourself, in the exercise of good works: for according to the doctrine of the same council, Althor every one should firmly trust to the divine assistance, yet nevertheless those who think they stand, ought to have a care they fall not, and work their falvation with fear and trembling, by labour, by watching, by alms, by prayers, by offerings, by fasts, by charity. Because not being as yet regenerated to glory, but only to the bopes of enjoying it, they ought to stand in fear of the battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, in which they must yet engage, and in which they cannot conquer, unless by the grace of God they obey the apostle, who admonishes monishes us not to live according to the flesh; for if we live according to it, we shall die, but if by the spirit we shall mortify in us the works of the flesh, we shall live. Ibid.

3. The third means is diligently to have a care of five things. 1. To fly the dangerous occasions of offending God; for he who preserves not himself from danger shall fall therein. 2. Not to fall into a remissions, or to rise as soon as we are fallen, because that easily leads to sin. 3. To avoid the sins of omission, and among others, those which are against the obligations of one's state; pious persons are frequently deceived in this point. 4. To preserve yourself from a secret presumption, which insensibly mingling itself with virtue, is a great disposition to vice, and the ruin of virtue. 5. To avoid a multitude of venial sins, which being neglected lead to mortal. He who despises small faults, says the wise man, will fall by little and little. Eccl. xix.

4. The fourth means is, to examine often the condition of your foul, her habits, her inclinations, her affections; to discover those which are ill, and correct them. For this reason you must frequently reslect upon yourself, and from time to time, or at least once a year, review and renew your interior state, that you may get fresh strength in the service of God. To read often the advices given above in Chap. XIV.

and the Christian maxims in Chap. XV.

And in fine, the great, necessary, and most effectual means, is to pray much, and beg of God frequently this holy perseverance. Hence it is that the Son of God says, that we must watch and pray; that we must pray always without intermission. Luke xviii. St. Augustin says, that it is only granted to those that pray for it. And the second council of Orange teaches us, that even the faithful and saints ought always to implore the divine assistance, that they may arrive at a good end, or persevere in good works. Chap. 10.

O Theotime, how happy would you be, if having begun to serve God in your tender years, you take care to say with David all your life, O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and even until now will I declare thy wonders, and until my old and decrepid age, O God, depart not from me. Psal. lxx.

After all, my dear reader, remember, that life paffes, death draws near, eternity approaches; life is but a moment, and on this moment depends eternity. O moment! O eternity! let us at least employ this moment to ferve our creator, who deferves an eternity of service. Let us consecrate ourselves entirely during this mortal life, to that adorable goodness, who gives himself fully to us for all eternity. Let nothing be able to separate us from his service. Who shall separate us from the Charity of Jesus Christ? fays the divine apostle, Rom. viii. O God, permit it not, but cause, by thy divine bounty, that our hearts be inseparably united unto thee; and that performing thy will in all things, we may love thee with perfeverance in this life, to love, adore, and bless thee for ever in heaven, where thou livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

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